

Comber, Thomas

Memoirs of the life and writings of Thomas Comber

London 1799

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THOMAS COMBER, D.D.

Dean of Durham.

Ann. Æt. 35.

B. A. O.

MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE and WRITINGS
OF
THOMAS COMBER, D. D.

SOMETIME
DEAN of DURHAM,

In which is introduced

A CANDID VIEW of the SCOPE and EXECUTION
of the several WORKS of DOCTOR COMBER,

As well printed as MS.

ALSO,

A fair Account of, his Literary Correspondence.

COMPILED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS.

By his Great Grandson

THOMAS COMBER, A. B.

Late of JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

*Non alio, ne Regum equidem, de sanguine malim
Esse satum, tanti est Pietas, atque aurea vitæ
Simplicitas, et nuda Fides, Lucroque pudendo
Pectus inaccessum, et rigidi mens conscia recti.*

Vanierii Præd. Rust. l. v.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE EDITOR,

And Sold by W. J. and J. RICHARDSON, Royal-Exchange.

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34.2.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE and WRITINGS

OF

THOMAS COMBER, D.D.

SOMEWHAT

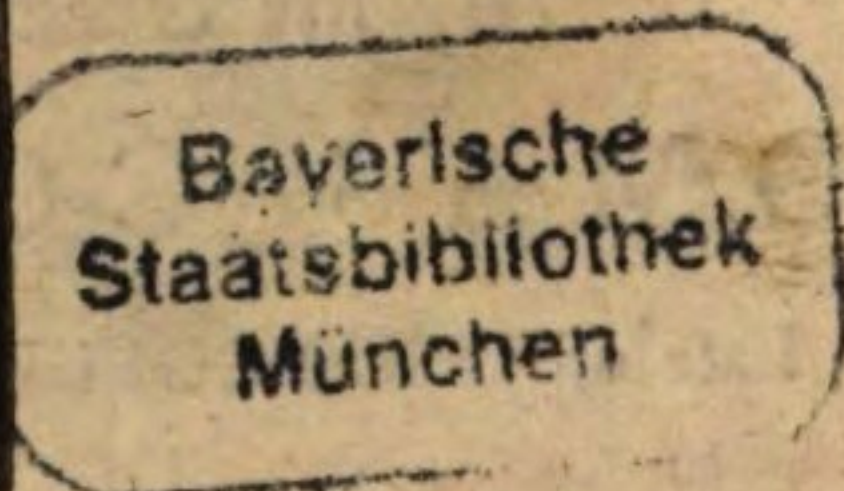
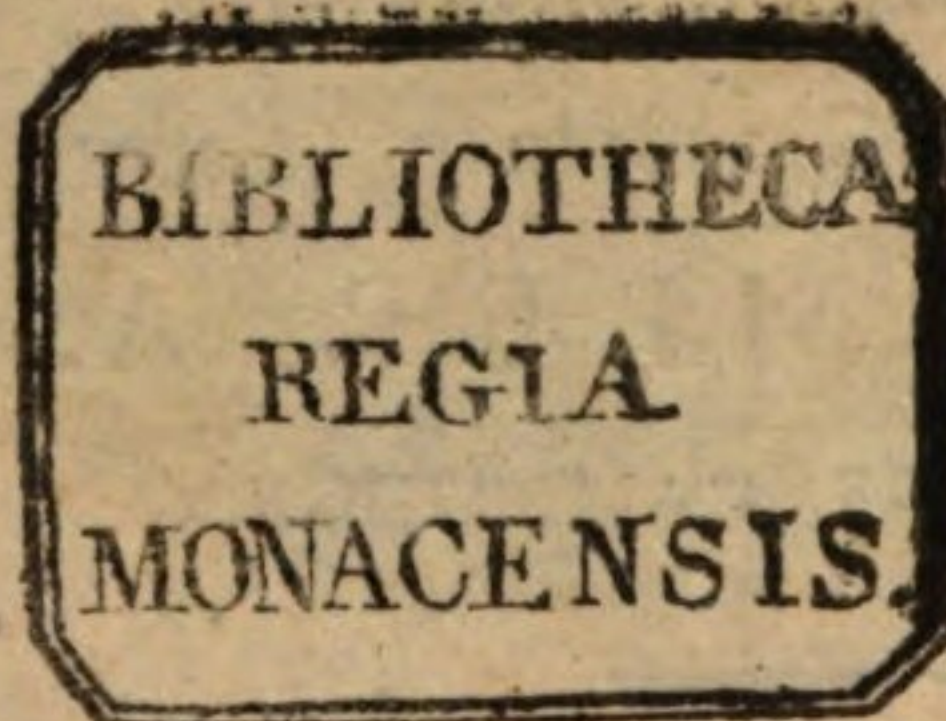
DEAN OF DURHAM

A CANONICAL HISTORY OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

A



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

Countess of *Ormond* and *Offory*,

Of the Kingdom of Ireland.

MADAM!

THAT the DEAN of DURHAM was united by marriage to the *grand-daughter* of your ladyship's ancestor, the great and good LORD DEPUTY WANDESFORD, VISCOUNT CASTLECOMER, and BARON MOWBRAY AND MUSTERS, of the Kingdom of Ireland, is so far from being the only title his memory will have to your esteem, that, when his character is made known to you by the perusal of the following pages, I have the utmost confidence
its

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

its intrinsic excellence will render it deserving both of your *regard* and *affection*. In committing therefore the following Memoirs to your ladyship's patronage and protection, I feel convinced I am presenting you a most acceptable offering.

The generous encouragement you have so munificently extended to this humble attempt to do justice to the dean's memory, could proceed only from your *honouring the design with your approbation*, the editor not having the good fortune to be personally known to you. But independent of the magnitude of your ladyship's encouragement, the kind manner of communicating it is that which stamps upon it a still higher value: to your ladyship belongs the happy art of enhancing a favour by the mode of conferring it, with me rests the pleasing task of expressing the sentiments of a grateful mind.

It

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

It would have given me the most heartfelt satisfaction if an abler hand than mine had been destined to pourtray the life and actions of this pious and excellent man ; but since those, who were far better qualified than myself to execute this pleasing office, are long since departed into the land of spirits, I feel myself called upon, not less by *duty* than *inclination*, to perform it in the best manner I am able ; and though I have by no means come up to the warmth of my wishes herein, I have endeavoured at least to present *a faithful picture*, though sensible the delicacy of colouring, and the bright finish of a master's hand, are wanting to set it off to the fairest advantage.

The motives which first urged the design, and the intention of the work itself, are so fully explained in the preface that it is unnecessary to repeat them in this place : however, lest an erroneous idea of my partiality should injure
the

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

the dean's memory, or obstruct his fame, it may be proper to remark, that in the following performance I have carefully endeavoured neither to exaggerate his merit by undeserved praise, nor to conceal his foibles through culpable weakness; and it must be solely attributed to the innate worth of his character, if the eye of impartiality and candour should see much of virtue to imitate and applaud, and a small alloy only of weakness to censure and condemn.

With sentiments of the warmest gratitude to your ladyship, and the most sincere good wishes for the happiness of yourself and every part of your noble family, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Your ladyship's most obedient
and very humble servant,

THOMAS COMBER.

Creech St. Michael,
Dec. 1st, 1798.

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P R E F A C E.

WHOEVER ventures to present his lucubrations to the public eye, seems to be called on, not only to explain the MOTIVES which first urged him to the undertaking, but also the TENDENCY and DESIGN thereof. This expectation seems to be founded in *justice* and *propriety* at all times, but never perhaps more so than in the present day, when the press is so frequently made the engine of *atheism* and *disloyalty*, and teems with productions tending to unsettle the minds of men, both with respect to their *civil* and *religious* principles. The present performance, whatever faults in other respects, it may possess, will not, it is hoped, be found deficient either in *religion* or *loyalty*. As these memoirs treat of an æra when POPERY and ARBITRARY POWER were made to give way to the mild religion of PROTESTANTISM and A MONARCHY CIRCUMSCRIBED WITHIN DUE BOUNDS, and as the eminent person whose actions are here recorded, was so firm a supporter of *protestantism*, even when a *popish* King

King sat on the throne, and afterwards so strenuous a vindicator of the glorious revolution of 1688, and the principles on which it was effected, so the editor of his life and writings, possessing no less loyal sentiments, though very inferior abilities, is equally ready to step forward with the utmost exertions of his small powers, whenever any great occasion renders it necessary, in defence of *the illustrious house of Hanover, the glorious civil constitution of these kingdoms, and the mild and gentle spirit of the protestant reformed faith.*

Whilst the editor glories in this opportunity of making the above public profession of his civil and religious principles*, in direct opposition to those impious doctrines which have been so industriously and successfully disseminated in the three kingdoms, and which, on all proper occasions, have invariably guided his public doctrine, as a minister of the church of England, no less than his private sentiments in the ordinary intercourse of so-

* “In times like these it is *a duty* incumbent on every public writer *boldly to proclaim his principles.* When the country is in danger, neutrality is disgraceful, and to be passive, is to be criminal.” See *Translation of Camille Jordan’s Address to his Constituents.* Longman, London, 1798, Preface p. 21.

ciety ; he requests the reader of the following sheets, to carry this declaration in his mind, as it may tend to throw considerable light on several passages which may occur therein.

With respect to the MOTIVES which induced this undertaking, the editor is ready to explain them with the greatest openness and candour.

Most of the great men who distinguished themselves at the important æra of the revolution in 1688, have had their actions recorded, and their merits exhibited, in the fairest point of view, by the hands of learned and skilful men ; but amongst the exceptions to this observation, the subject of the following memoirs is a striking instance : but though few of those who took any considerable part in the above remarkable transaction, have had less said of them, in the way of just commendation, than the dean ; still fewer can be found who are more deserving of being celebrated. But if the pen of the panegyrist hath not been employed in his praise, he hath not escaped the animadversions of those who, in the true spirit of malevolence and envy, delight to point out the failings and exaggerate the mistakes to which even

even the best of men are liable in their progress through life. By such interpreters as these of human actions, the dean hath been held up as the patron and supporter of the tyrannical and irrational doctrine of PASSIVE-OBEDIENCE AND NON-RESISTANCE : but these critics have thought proper entirely to suppress the information that his *after-conduct* completely atoned for any temporary error in judgment of this complexion : they have omitted mentioning the obvious remark, that this error was the offspring of an amiable principle of thinking better of James II. than he was afterwards found in any degree to deserve, and that when he perceived the mistake into which he had fallen, he was neither deterred by false shame from acknowledging it, nor by fear from endeavouring to repair it at every hazard.

Thus however it has ever happened, and thus it will probably happen to the end of time ; and so long as evil passions have sway in the human breast, the *unworthy* and *envious* will continue to fasten with peculiar avidity on any failings of an exalted character, which may tend to bring it more on a level with their
own :

own: no worth, no learning, no innocence, or purity of intention whatever, can shield their possessor from the envenomed malice of a calumnious tongue, it is a burthen which is appendant to the possession of merit, an unavoidable tax which is laid upon virtue, that it must submit to be maligned by vice. The attempt therefore to clear an eminent character from ungenerous misrepresentation, and to place it in that just degree of estimation it so highly deserves, will certainly meet with the approbation of every bosom wherein either virtue or humanity reside.

Many years ago, when a new edition of the Biog. Brit. was about to be printed, the late very learned and pious *Archdeacon Blackburne* wrote to the editor's father, exhorting him to prepare an account of their common ancestor for that publication, from the excellent materials of which he knew him to be possessed. Ill-health, and a variety of circumstances, at that time it seems hindered *Dr. Comber* from complying with the *Archdeacon's* request. When the dean's article afterwards appeared in the above work, the *Archdeacon* again wrote to him, "not without reproach," as he himself informs

us, “for having permitted such an *imperfect* account to appear.” The account given was indeed very imperfect, and this induced *Dr. Comber* to sit down with a design of writing the dean’s memoirs, with greater extent than any one, not in possession of his materials, could do. He had however only sketched out the outlines of his design, and collected *some* of the articles which appear in the appendix, when death arrested his progress, and with his imperious mandate, bid him prepare for another scene. That *Dr. Comber* did not live to complete his pious design, is matter of sincere regret, since his fine understanding and elegant mind would have done ample justice to the dean’s memory.

At the time of *Dr. Comber*’s death his son, the editor of these memoirs, was only thirteen years, and since that period, a variety of concurring circumstances, in no degree depending upon himself, have deprived him of the leisure indispensably requisite for the prosecution of his father’s design: at length it is permitted him to fill up the outlines so ably sketched out, though conscious it is done with very unequal strength; such however as these memoirs are,
though

though not such as his affection would wish them to be, they are now humbly offered to the lovers of *learning, piety, and goodness*.

In delineating the lives of men famous for their literary attainments, or the splendour of their actions, the historian hath too often the painful task imposed on him of staining his page with the enumeration of his hero's weaknesses, and not unfrequently with the record of his vices : great mental powers are so far from shielding their possessors from the insidious attacks of vice, as might naturally be expected, that we every day see men of first-rate abilities the slaves of the most ignoble and dishonourable passions ; and we are too often compelled to observe the man of great *public abilities* disgrace himself by the most unworthy conduct in *private life*.

We cannot help deploring these melancholy instances of human weakness, but in proportion as they rouse our indignation, or excite our contempt, the man who adds the virtues of retirement to the shining qualities of public life, rises in our estimation, and becomes entitled to a double portion of our esteem and respect.

spect. This latter was the laudable conduct of the pious dean.

The editor of the following memoirs hath long cherished an idea, that it would greatly tend to promote the interests of RELIGION and VIRTUE, if the actions of a man were made public who always had a respect to their sacred dictates, and uniformly obeyed their commands; he has felt persuaded that the cause of goodness would come recommended with additional force to the minds of men, if by placing such a meritorious example before their eyes, they shall at last be convinced, that the virtuous and good have a great advantage over the wicked and unprincipled, even in this present life, and that they have every thing to hope for, and nothing to fear, in a future and eternal state of things.

To rescue therefore from unmerited obloquy the memory of a man not less famous in his day for his loyalty to his *lawful* sovereign, than for his unwearied zeal to advance the cause of the protestant reformed religion, and check the dangerous progress of popery and arbitrary power—to shew him in every relative capacity of
of

of private life not less exemplary, than in his more public conduct—and to exhibit his character to be copied and admired, *is the humble design of these memoirs.*

If the perusal of the following sheets can pleasingly engage the reader's attention, or usefully employ his time, if it can add any thing to the scale of virtue, or abate any thing of the virulence of vice, the editor's object will be crowned with complete success. Under the impression of this hope he ventures to commit these *sacred depositaries* to the public eye, flattering himself that if his feeble attempt should expose him to the animadversion of the censorious critic, *the purity of his motive* will entitle him to the indulgence of the *liberal and candid* reader.

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of private life and its exemplification in the
more public conduct—and to exhibit the char-
acter to be formed and sustained. The language
of the work is simple.

In the pursuit of the following objects, the
possibility of error in the reader's judgment, or
misapprehension of the truth, is to be avoided, and any
thing to the least of error or mistake in thing
of the subject of fact, the subject of object
will be cleared up with complete accuracy. The
the foundation of the hope is to answer to
conduct in the public and private life of the public
and to the private life of the individual. It is to be the
first step towards the attainment of the highest of the
conduct in the public and private life of the individual. It will
be the first step towards the attainment of the highest of the
conduct in the public and private life of the individual.

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MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
Dr. COMBER.

CHAP. I.

*Occurrences till the Year 1659, when he was
admitted of Sidney-Sussex College, Cambridge.*

THERE are few methods of conveying in-struction more pleasing than that of biography; we fancy ourselves to be in the situation of him whose actions we peruse; we enter with warmth into those scenes which exhibit him in a prosperous situation; we sympathize in those distressful occurrences which are sent by heaven to try his patience, fortitude, and resignation.—If he rises superior to the attacks of adversity, we rejoice in his victory, and applaud his resolution.—If he sinks under temptation, we pity his weakness, and learn how to avoid his errors.—If the sunshine of prosperity should gild his prospects with its bright and animating rays; if preferment and honour

CHAP.
I.

B should

CHAP. I. should court his acceptance, as the reward of his merit, we are stirred up to emulate his virtue, and render ourselves like him worthy of success. It will be found that this more happy fortune fell to the lot of him, a faithful picture of whose life and writings is here presented to the public eye.

The narration, here humbly offered to the reader, will possess one undoubted claim to his attention and regard, that the facts which are found recorded in the following sheets, have the most unequivocal marks of truth and authenticity stamped upon them.— All the incidents of any consequence, here related, have the written testimony of the person himself, concerning whom they are told, to support them; and the account of his epistolary correspondence, here given, is taken from the original letters which were addressed to him, now in the editor's possession, and copies of his answers to them, written in general with his own hand.

He had accustomed himself from an early period of his life, to make notes of the principal occurrences which happened either to himself, or those with whom he was immediately con-

connected. When he began this laudable custom is uncertain ; but he continued it till a short time previous to his death. There is no chasm, therefore, to be supplied by conjecture, or the less justifiable mode of bold, though, perhaps, unfounded assertion ; but, on the contrary, his own hand-writing, like *the faithful mirror of truth*, furnishes us with the most authentic record of his actions.

If we had no other rule to direct our judgment, than what is derived from a general idea of the Dean's character, that alone would be sufficient to convince us, that no suggestion of *vanity* or *self-conceit* prompted his meek and gentle spirit to leave behind him these records of himself. But we are not left in uncertainty respecting his motives, which, as himself informs us, were, "as well that he might not seem *ungrateful* for God's mercies, as that *others* might not be ignorant of his obligations to his providence."

Gratitude, which takes root and flourishes in a worthy mind, and in that only, was so intimately interwoven in his nature, as to form the leading feature in his character. We shall see him frequently lifting up his thoughts in

CHAP.
I.

spontaneous effusions of grateful sensibility to the Fountain of Mercy, upon every communication of its favour extended to him, and always paying the just tribute of thanks to the instruments which heaven employed to dispense its bounty.

But besides the above history of the principal events of his life, which he was induced to write for the reasons above-mentioned, he also kept a private register of the faults of each day of his life, marked by the initials of Greek words signifying them; and they were only such sins of *infirmity* as must ever fall to the lot of frail humanity, and as are common to the very best men. There is the strongest reason to conclude, that such a registering of our faults upon earth, in order to correct and amend them, would be a most effectual means of *blotting them out* of the register of heaven.

If this pious custom was adopted into general use, with a similar view, it would undoubtedly prove a most powerful assistant to virtue, and a great excitement to a pious life. In order, however, to render it of general utility, sincerity seems to be indispensibly necessary in noting down our failings and vices, as well

as

as our more shining and splendid actions. In CHAP. giving a colour and complexion to our deeds, I. *arrogance* and *self-applause* should be entirely banished from our minds; *gratitude* should paint in the most lively and expressive tints, the favours we have received from heaven; *humility* should exhibit to us our own unworthiness to receive the least of its mercies. For a faithful illustration of these remarks, and the excellent fruits which this practice may produce, the reader is referred to the perusal of the following pages.

One error, however, the incautious should be particularly guarded against, which, if it is adopted, must inevitably prove of very pernicious consequence; and that is, not to mark down with a scrupulous exactness, the misfortunes which have befallen them, and slightly pass over the numerous undeserved bounties they have experienced at the hand of God.— This conduct must render men discontented and unhappy, whatever their relative situation in life may happen to be; and will tend to draw down the indignation of heaven, and provoke the Almighty to withdraw those blessings, which have been conferred on an unworthy

B 3

CHAP. I. } worthy object. *Sincerity* is, therefore, no less requisite in appreciating the dispensations of providence towards us, than in estimating the comparative merit or demerit of our own actions.

The editor will no longer trespass on the reader's patience, or detain him from the perusal of the following narrative; he will only beg leave to bespeak his utmost candour and indulgence, to the numerous imperfections which he is too conscious will occur in the following work, and request him always to bear in his mind, that piety to the memory of a departed ancestor, blended with the conviction that his character and numerous writings, if made known to the world, would prove highly serviceable to the cause and interests of virtue, are his apologists for venturing to introduce the Dean's character to public notice and regard.

The subject of these memoirs (as himself informs us) was descended from a very ancient family, at Barkham, in the county of Suffex, and that manor was bestowed, according to a family tradition, upon one of his ancestors, — de Combre, by William the Conqueror, with

with whom he came over from Normandy to England, for killing its Saxon or Danish lord, in the famous battle which placed that duke on the throne of England. CHAP.
I.

It is an undoubted fact, that his great-grandfather, Thomas Comber, esq; was a counsellor at law, and justice of the peace, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and one of this gentleman's sons, was father to Doctor Thomas Comber, master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and dean of Carlisle, well known for his learning, loyalty, and sufferings.

His grandfather, John Comber, esq; was uncle to the Dean of Carlisle; and his father, James Comber, was the fourth son of that gentleman.

His grandfather dying while his father was yet a minor, left him to the care of his elder brother, Francis, by whom, at a proper age, he was bound apprentice to a considerable grocer, in Southwark. At the expiration of his apprenticeship, he does not seem to have launched out into the ocean of trade, being probably deterred by the gathering public storm; but seems to have confined himself to a quiet, retired life at Westerham, in the county

CHAP. I. of Kent: however, by his apprenticeship he became a freeman of the city of London, which privilege his son afterwards found advantageous to him.

His mother was the daughter of Mr. Bryan Burton, of Westerham, in Kent, who married Mrs. Alice Austen, and had by her two sons, Bryan and Thomas, and two daughters, Joice and Mary. Their youngest daughter, Mary, when not much above eighteen years old, was married to Mr. Edward Hampden, of Westerham. This gentleman left her so young a widow, that her own age, added to that of her infant daughter, did not amount to twenty years at the time of his death. Mr. James Comber, the Dean's father, married this lady about the year 1640.

The issue of this marriage was five children, James, Thomas, John, *the Dean*, and a daughter, named Anne. The second and third of these children died infants, and the daughter in her eighth year, whom the Dean describes, as "a child of great wit and good features."

1644. *Thomas*, the subject of these memoirs, was born, to use his own words, "*at the end of the year*, on Wednesday the nineteenth day of March,

March, 1644, at Westerham, in Kent, and CHAP.
L
baptized in the parish church there, on Sunday {
the twenty-third (of the same month), by the
Rev. Mr. Bray," according to the rites of the
Church of England.

He notes, that "himself was the *last* child
baptized in that font, by the *common prayer*
form, which the rebels then put down; and
a daughter of his half-sister, was the *first*
christened by the restored form, in the year
1660; and that both were out of the same
house."

The rebellion growing hot during his in-
fancy, his grandfather, Mr. Burton, was se-
questered for his loyalty, and his father so ill-
used on the same account, he was obliged to
fly his country, and take refuge in Flanders, for
four years, during which space his son was left
intirely under the care of his mother.

He informs us, that, "during the first years
of his life, he laboured under great bodily
weakness, insomuch, that his life was fre-
quently despaired of; but, by the extraordi-
nary care of his mother, and the application
of proper medicines, his health was restored:
but

CHAP. but he was so much weakened by his sickness,
I.  that he did not walk alone till four years of age."

From this account it is apparent, that the thread of his life was originally spun of an extremely tender and delicate texture, and he acknowledges, on this and other occasions, his obligations to this excellent parent, to whom he constantly rendered the just tribute of gratitude and filial affection.

1649. It appears from letters and other documents, that his father returned to his family, at Westerham, some time in the course of the year 1649; but, as our author does not mention the circumstance, it is not known by what means he obtained a safe retirement there. The loyalty of his family, both on his father's and mother's side, is well worthy of notice. His father was banished into Flanders for several years by the usurper Cromwell, for his adherence to his lawful sovereign, Charles I. his grandfather, Mr. Burton, had his estate sequestered for the same reason; and his uncle, the Dean of Carlisle, was imprisoned, plundered, and deprived of his preferments, on the same account. In
the

the course of these memoirs we shall have frequent occasion to remark, that himself was as true and loyal to his *lawful* sovereign as his progenitors had been before him.

CHAP.
L

1650.

Having been placed at an English school when he was four years old, and continued there for two years, when he was about six years old, in the year 1650, he was removed from thence, and placed under the tuition of the Rev. Thomas Walter, who then kept a flourishing school at Westerham, with great credit to himself, and advantage to his scholars. This gentleman prepared several of his pupils for the university, who afterwards turned out excellent scholars, and did him infinite credit. Our young scholar frequently acknowledges his obligations to this gentleman, whom he calls “his beloved master,” and remarks, that “under him he laid the foundation not only of learning, but also of religion;” and we shall hereafter see what a glorious superstructure his diligence raised on this excellent foundation.—He does not, however, forget to acknowledge the co-operation of his mother in his religious instruction, but frequently expresses his singular obligations to her on that account.

He

CHAP.

I.

He seems to have been early designed for a learned education, not only on account of his assiduity and quick apprehension, which, about this time, attracted the notice of his relation, the Dean of Carlisle, but also from the encouragement given him by that pious and learned man.

1652.

Mr. Walter having composed a Greek grammar for the use of his scholars, and being disabled by the palsy from transcribing it himself, employed his pupil in writing it out fair, which gave a peculiar cast to his hand-writing; but, though he wrote a very small character, it is remarkably distinct and legible. He remarks, he could read and write Greek before he was ten years old, and it is very probable the exercise of writing this grammar might bring him sooner acquainted with that language, than he could otherwise have been. He certainly gave very early indications of a first-rate genius, and the hopes which the early period of his life gave to his friends of his future progress in learning, were more than fulfilled.

1653.

His uncle, Mr. Francis Comber, advised him to accept an invitation given him by Mr. John Evans (brother to his uncle's wife), who kept a school

a school on Tower-Hill, in London, and had a great repute for a *short method of teaching*; and he accordingly spent about half a year in this gentleman's academy. It is a little singular, that, accustomed as he was to speak with gratitude of all to whom he was obliged through life, he should speak with none at all of Mr. Evans; from whence it seems reasonable to conclude, that his *short method*, like others of the same boasting tribe, proved, in effect, *the longest*; and indeed in a course of learning it frequently happens, that, according to the old proverb, what seems to be the farthest way about is in reality the nearest way home.

He spent some part of this year under Mr. John Hooper, who, having been usher under the famous Farnaby, now kept a large school himself, at Seven Oaks, in Kent. By his expression, on this occasion, he seems to intimate, that he *merely spent* sometime there, if, indeed, we should not say *misspent*. He had, however, a more severe loss than that of a little time, which his quick apprehension and unwearied assiduity would have soon redeemed, for his relation and promised patron, the Dean of Carlisle, died about this time. He had indeed been

CHAP. I. been sequestered some time by the rebels for his loyalty, but while he lived there was hope he might be restored ; and his solemn promise might safely be depended on, to educate and provide for this *kindred genius*. But *whatever is, is best*.—It pleased Providence to take away from him this friend, and to raise up to him many others, when he least expected it.

1655. Falling into the measles this year, on his recovery he was again removed to Mr. Evans.—The terms in which he speaks of this gentleman, seem rather to convey an idea of dislike, if not disrespect, and there is every reason to conclude he would not have done this without very sufficient grounds. Probably he either resembled *Orbilius*, to whom Horace has given the dishonourable epithet, “*plagiosus*,” the scourger, or his namesake in Shakespeare, who was famed for ignorance.

It may here be remarked, that, without some very cogent reason, a frequent change of schools is bad policy. To chuse a good master, at first, is a matter of the utmost consequence ; for so many disadvantages attend a removal from one seminary to another, that it is rarely found, on the whole, to be advantageous

geous. A change of masters generally implies a change of method, and always of acquaintance; and if the first is tolerable, and the scholars not exceedingly objectionable, which rarely happens under a tolerable preceptor, it is best to adhere to the first choice.

CHAP.
I.

In the course of this year he caught the small pox, and recovered with difficulty, owing probably to his having scarce regained his strength after the measles: however, as the proverb tells us, that “losses are sometimes benefits,” this distemper relieved him from a master whom he appears to have greatly disliked. He returned in the following year to his first justly beloved master, who gave him *private*, as well as *public* instruction, till his death.

1656.

Mr. Walter died on the twenty-first of February in this year. We are not apprized of the immediate cause of his death; but, by the encomiums bestowed on him by his young scholar, we may venture to conclude he was a person of considerable merit, and doubtless his loss, as a valuable member of society, must have been sensibly felt. We may be pretty well assured, that a person of so grateful a disposition as Mr. Comber has already shewn him-

1657.

CHAP. himself to be, did not fail to shed many pious
 I. tears over his grave; and, in all probability,
 he sung some elegiac strain on the occasion,
 though nothing of this kind hath come down
 to us; for he began very early in life to sa-
 crifice to the muses, and was a tolerable poet
 at a tender age.

Mr. Barham coming over to Westerham, to
 shew his respect to his old master, Mr. Walter
 (who sent him his first scholar to Cambridge),
 preached his funeral sermon, and, having ex-
 amined our young scholar, found he had made
 such good use of his time, that, in point of
 learning, he thought him nearly fit for the uni-
 versity.

1658. The Rev. William Holland, who succeeded
 Mr. Bray in the living of Westerham, became
 soon acquainted with the merit of Mr. Comber,
 and as he was judged too young to be sent to
 the university, generously offered to read choice
 Latin and Greek authors to him, for the space
 of a year. This time he employed to such
 advantage, that he greatly distinguished him-
 self when he came the following year to offer
 himself a candidate for admission into Sydney-
 Sussex College, Cambridge.

If

If we may judge, as seems highly reasonable, of his application and industry, in other branches of study, by what is handed down to us of his labours in divinity, we shall justly be amazed at his parts and improvements.— In a miscellaneous common-place book, are found the originals of all the sermon notes he took from the preaching of Mr. Holland, and other gentlemen, at Westerham, during this whole year. The method of the best preachers at that time was, as many modern critics imagine, a little too much burthened with divisions and subdivisions; this circumstance must have rendered it a much more difficult task for an hearer to give a tolerably exact account of a sermon: the method also then in use of preaching from short notes, must have required so much attention to the preacher, as rendered him that ready preacher which he soon became. The candid reader, who peruses the specimens of the sermon notes, he took in this year, which are given in the appendix, will allow them strong proofs of parts and industry, in a youth not yet fourteen; and especially if it be considered what a small por-
C tion

CHAP. tion of time could be given to this study, and
 I. that he took notes of considerable length from
 nearly thirty sermons in this year.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

From the time of Mr. Comber's admission at Cambridge to the year 1666, when he took the degree of M. A. at the same university.

AFTER a fair examination he was admitted of Sydney-Suffex College, Cambridge, on the 18th day of April, 1659, being not one calendar month turned of fourteen years. If we consider the weakness of his earliest years, the illnesses which had interrupted the course of his studies, and the unhappy changes of his masters, his early admission must be allowed a good proof of his abilities, and especially if we take into consideration, the great credit with which he passed his examination.

CHAP.
II.
1659.

With that pious reference to a superintending Providence, which marks most of his reflections, he observes, "that Providence directed his father to place him under the care of the Rev. Edmund Matthews, B. D. senior fellow and president of the college." He owns it "impossible to express how much he was indebted to this gentleman's learning and affability,"

CHAP. bility," whom he justly styles, "his worthy
II. } tutor." In fact, Mr. Matthews lent him all
kinds of books, and instructed him privately in
all the ingenious *arts* and *sciences*, in which,
at that period of time, any considerable pro-
gress had been made. He learned under this
gentleman, *experimental philosophy*, *geometry*,
astronomy, and other parts of the mathematics;
also *music* and *painting*, and even the *oriental*
tongues; likewise an excellent method of com-
mon-place for *philosophy* and *divinity*, of which
he acknowledges he found "incredible benefit
in the course of his future studies."

Mr. Matthews must undoubtedly have been
a man of very extensive learning, and an highly
cultivated mind; it is, therefore, no wonder
he should receive pleasure from communi-
cating his knowledge to his young pupil. If
we consider how many people think the pains
they have bestowed in the culture of flowers,
overpaid by their *beauty* and *odour*, though
they do but bloom as it were for a moment,
e'er their beauty and fragrance are gone; we
shall not be surprized that a man of *taste* and
science should delight in the cultivation of a
blooming

blooming genius, the fruit of which is so far from fading away, that it is *continually improv-* CHAP.
*ing**, and always remains to repay with grati- II.
 tude the pains and care which have been bestowed upon it.

The iniquity of the rebellious times we are now arrived at, rendered Mr. Comber's father far less able than he was willing, to support his son at the university; and Mr. Burton's estate being sequestered for his loyalty, he also was incapacitated from rendering any material assistance in his grandson's academical education. This affliction of his family was, however, common to some of the best in the kingdom, who continued faithful to their lawful sovereign.

It is probable that under these disadvantageous circumstances, he would hardly have been able to continue at Cambridge, if he had not received considerable assistance from other sources than those of his own family. The slender state of his finances, at this period of

* Vide Mr. Addison's paper in the Spectator, on the immortality of the soul; wherein he elegantly and beautifully considers the *perpetual progress* of the soul towards a state of perfection, without being able to arrive at it *in this world*; as a strong argument for its being made perfect in an *immortal state*.

CHAP. his life, made him begin very early to exercise
 II. a virtue, which is allowed to be of such consequence in life, that an eminent heathen philosopher* hath assured us, “every thing divine accompanies it :” this virtue was prudence. He began to exhibit this in the regulation of his expences, which he put into a very excellent and regular train, and thereby made a little go a great way, with much credit to himself.

His mother, by the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Barham, now in possession of the living of Great St. Helens, in London, procured him an annual exhibition of *ten pounds* from a fund of *three hundred pounds per annum*, raised at annual feasts, and given by *Kentish men, citizens of London*, towards the education and maintenance of scholars, at either of the universities.— Thus he profitted by having been born in Kent, and his father being a freeman of the city of London.

1660. The merit of our young student was not overlooked by the Rev. Richard Minshall, D.D. master of the college, who, without any application, and even without his knowledge, generously recommended him to his relation Mr.

* Nullum numen abest, si adsit prudentia. Horat.

Walter Pell, an Hamburgh merchant, then on a visit at Sydney-Lodge. This gentleman gave him *five pounds* per annum, which added to his exhibition and the kindness of his tutor, he informs us, “enabled him to live very well, and that from this time, he put his parents to no other expence, but that of providing him his cloaths and books.” This frugality must remind the learned reader of a present of *five shillings* made to the famous Mr. Hooker, by Bishop Jewel, and of a most eloquent oration (rather than epistle), written by the celebrated R. Ascham, to secure a stipend of *forty shillings* per annum, from an Archbishop of York, which a genius among the modern Cantabs would hardly endure the fatigue of writing, for an annual sum of *forty pounds*.

The epitomes which he made about this time of *logic, ethics, &c.* are standing monuments of his great and indefatigable industry. If we reflect how small a progress was then made in real science, we cannot help regretting that so much diligence should have no better subjects to work on. There are however some epitomes which he made in early youth, of real value, as particularly Doctor Henry More’s

CHAP. piece on the immortality of the soul, and
 II. Bishop Ruft's *Lux Orientalis*.

It is probable that about this time he wrote parts of several comedies still extant in manuscript, one of which in the allegorical style has Greek names, expressive of the *virtues, vices,* and qualities of the human mind; being used to denote the personages of the drama. In another, the names of the personages are Placentia, Catharina, Captain Coury, and Petrarcho. The names Æga, Philoclea, and Leonidas, occur in another. There is also an imperfect prologue to some play, "whose author's name," he says, "if known, would be a sufficient trumpet to its fame;" this is a dialogue betwixt Cupid and a miller's boy.

1662. On the 18th of January, 1662, he was chosen scholar of the house, with a pension of *five pounds* per annum, which to him, who was so excellent an œconomist, was an addition of such consequence as to give him a prospect of *absolute plenty*. The next day his grace was past *in his college* for the degree of A. B. and his patron Mr. Pell, on occasion of the expence of it, presented him with *five pounds*. After a strict public examination he was admitted to the degree

degree of A. B. *in the university*, on the 21st of CHAP.
II.
January, 1662. He indulged the natural wish of a young scholar, to continue in the university, being led to entertain hopes of obtaining a fellowship, either in his own college, or in St. John's, the master of which, Doctor Gunning, had made him many promises. These hopes proving abortive, and the Kentish gentlemen withdrawing the whole income of their fund to support the nonconforming presbyterian clergy, he was obliged, contrary to his wishes, to leave the university, but left his name behind him as a pledge of his readiness to return on the first favourable occasion, and retired to his father's house.

It is much to be regretted that learning, like probity*, should often have too much occasion to complain "she is fed only with praises, and therefore starves;" however learning, if accompanied with piety, will stifle its complaints of this kind, as happened in the instance of our young scholar: we shall soon see, that his *piety* and *patience* met with their due reward.

Scarce was he set down to a course of study in his retirement, when Mr. John Holney, of

* "Probitas laudatur et alget."

CHAP. II. Eden-Bridge, a pious old gentleman, and his father's particular friend, found out his merit, and visiting him, made him an handsome present, with a request he would draw on him at any time, for any sum he might want, desiring nothing in return but to be remembered in his prayers.

This is a very remarkable instance of discernment in finding out merit, and liberality in rewarding it, which reflects the highest honour on its author, and consecrates his memory in the grateful mind of the remote posterity of the object of his bounty. Providence, on which he always confidently relied, raised up to our young student so many friends from other quarters, that he never found it necessary to avail himself of Mr. Holney's munificence in the future periods of his life. Notwithstanding this, his grateful mind was not formed of such materials, as to lose the impression of this noble and generous conduct, and he notes with marks of true satisfaction, that, "in the course of time, he had the pleasure of presenting this liberal patron with the first part of his Commentary on the Common-Prayer." Mr. Comber takes this opportunity of remarking, that his "former kind patron"

patron, Mr. Pell, lived to hear him preach a sermon, in London, to his great satisfaction, which he expressed by inviting him to his house, and making him an handsome present." CHAP.
II.

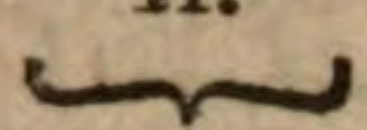
Early in the year 1663, he accepted an invitation to the house of his late preceptor, Mr. Holland, who was now rector of All-Hallows Staining, London. This gentlemen wanting a reader procured a dispensation, and prevailed upon Gilbert, Lord Bishop of London*, to grant letters dimissory to George, Lord Bishop of St. Asaph†, who ordained him deacon on the 18th of August, 1663, in Henry VIIth's Chapel. He now studied in Sion College Library, with great profit and satisfaction to himself, and read prayers on Sundays for Mr. Holland. 1663.

He gladly seized this opportunity of resorting to the most eminent preachers in London, and made epitomes of their sermons, as he had formerly successfully done at Westerham, the year previous to his admission at Cambridge,

* Dr. Gilbert Sheldon, soon afterwards translated to Canterbury.

† Dr. George Griffiths.

and

CHAP. and also during his continuance in that learned
II.  seminary.

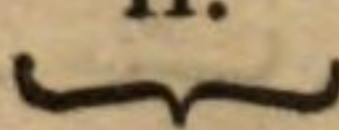
The exact time that he commenced his acquaintance with Mr. Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, is not certain; but it was, in all probability, in the course of this year, as, about this time, a sermon was published by that gentleman, “On the Wisdom of being religious;” which he had preached before the lord mayor, &c. and published at their request. In a copy of this sermon there is written, by Mr. Comber’s hand, in the title page, “*Ex dono authoris.*”

The Rev. William Mompeffon, rector of Bilsthorp, in Nottinghamshire, and chaplain to Sir George Saville, addressed a letter, about this time, to Mr. Holland, in which he requested that gentleman to send a person of learning, &c. to be curate to the Rev. Gilbert Bennet’s living of Stonegrave, in Yorkshire, who promised, if he liked the man, to resign the living, in his favour, in a year or two, as he was possessed of other preferment.

Mr. Holland, though exceeding sorry to lose him, yet, in consideration of the great prospect

prospect of advantage which this offer held out, CHAP.
generously gave up his own convenience to II.
promote Mr. Comber's interest, and immediately
fixed upon him as answering in every particu-
lar his friend's wishes. With sentiments of
unfeigned gratitude he accepted this invitation,
which he piously considered *as the call of Pro-
vidence*; and having taken leave of his friends
in Kent, on the 28th of September, set out from
London towards the North.

Considering that, if he should be fixed in
Yorkshire, he should not, in all probability,
very soon have an opportunity of seeing Cam-
bridge again, he determined now to pay a visit
to that learned seminary, for which he enter-
tained a very great affection, as his letters suf-
ficiently demonstrate. On his arrival in the
university, he found, by the information of his
friend, Mr. Covel, of Christ's College, that his
tutor had omitted to acquaint him with the
vacancy of a fellowship in his own college.—
It is hard to conjecture what was the real cause
of this omission, in a tutor so truly his friend
as Mr. Matthews appears to have been. The
only probable reason that suggests itself on a
subject, upon which himself is silent, is, that
this

CHAP. this gentlemen, from his thorough acquaint-
II.  tance with his late pupil's extraordinary abilities, thought it more for his interest, and the advantage of the church, that he should have a more extensive field to display his abilities, than the confinement of a cloister. If this was Mr. Matthews's reason for a conduct, which doubtless bore the appearance of unkindness, till it was properly explained, the event did infinite honour to that gentleman's discernment and penetration.

Mr. Comber proceeded from Cambridge to pay his respects to Mr. Mompeffon, and preached his first sermon in that gentleman's parish church, on or about the 6th day of October, in this year, and a second either on the afternoon of the same day or the following Sunday; and soon after took his leave.

He next waited upon Mr. Bennet, at Southwell, who treated him with very great respect, and prevailed on him to stay several days with him. Having expressed his sense of this gentleman's kindness, he set forward towards Stonegrave, at which place he arrived on the 17th of April, 1663. He began his ministry with preaching from short heads, finding,

finding, as he himself says, “that he could trust his memory for the matter, and his invention for the expression;” and he persevered in this practice, to the great satisfaction of his audience, and the saving to himself of much useful time for study.

CHAP.
II.

The church of Dalby, in Yorkshire, becoming vacant, in the beginning of this year, by the death of the Rev. Ralph Watson, the incumbent, it was immediately offered to our young divine, who, with suitable acknowledgements, declining it for himself, obtained it for his friend, Mr. Charles Man.

1664.

In recording this event, he calls Mr. Man “his old friend;” we know not how long *prior* to this date the friendship had subsisted between them, but *posterior* to it the continuance thereof was uninterrupted for more than thirty-five years, even unto the death of Mr. Comber; and Mr. Man preached his funeral sermon, as will be seen hereafter.

After a strict examination he was ordained priest, in York minster, on the 20th of September, 1664, by the most reverend father in God, Doctor Richard Sterne, lord archbishop of that see. No question was made of his age,

CHAP.
II.

age, on account of his uncommon qualifications. When this irregular ordination was long afterwards objected to the archbishop, Mr. Comber had the peculiar satisfaction to hear his grace say, “I have found no reason to repent.” The good archbishop, in all probability, acted on the principles of the primitive church, which admitted persons not only to the degree of presbyter, but even of bishop, under the regular age, for the sake of extraordinary qualifications. Ordination of ministers under legitimate age appears, however, to have given offence in those days, for Mr. Comber composed a short discourse, about this time, which he called, “*An Apology for young Ministers,*” which goes on the supposition of such offence.

At the particular request of William Thornton, esq; and his accomplished and pious lady, Alice, daughter of the right hon. Christopher Wandesford, lord deputy of Ireland, Mr. Comber removed to that gentleman’s ancient family seat, at East-Newton, in the parish of Stonegrave, in the beginning of March in this year, and he remarks that in that place, “he had an opportunity of improving in piety and all sorts of learning, it being,” adds he, “both

“both a very fine retirement, and affording very choice company.” The reader will readily acknowledge the justice of the latter part of the above remark, when he is informed Mr. Thornton visited most of the noble and opulent families of the rich and extensive county of York, and was nearly allied to many of them.

Matrimony seems to have entered into his thoughts very early, for in one of his diaries he notes, that in this year he made serious proposals of marriage to a young lady, whom he highly extols for endowments of body and mind; but, his proposals being rejected, he wisely determined to end his pursuit.

There is extant a receipt of his, dated the 5th of December, in this year, wherein he acknowledges the loan of several curious ancient coins and medals, which he borrowed of Mrs. Thornton, a copy of verses is subjoined in praise of them. From hence it appears his taste for knowledge was universal.

Our young divine spent the whole of the year 1665 in close study, and a faithful discharge of his duty, preaching every Sunday in the forenoon, and expounding the church catechism in the afternoon; which laudable practice

CHAP. tice he persevered in till he was removed to
II. other preferment. It was doubtless in the
course of this year, that he composed that catechism which he afterwards printed, and he laid the plan of it so, that all the answers are “*Yes,*” or “*No.*”

Notwithstanding the high and just encomiums which all orthodox divines have paid to the compilers of our liturgy, they have so generally thought the church catechism an insufficient system of instruction for their catechumens, that they have fallen upon various methods of explaining it. These several systems may have their advantages and disadvantages, but *this* possessed one recommendation which tended to render it very useful, viz. the answers being the *most simple possible*, were on that account best adapted to the *age* and *understanding* of those who learn the catechism; and it bears a striking resemblance to the celebrated Socratic way of arguing.

It is impossible to insist too strongly on the infinite importance, both to the *temporal* and *eternal* welfare of the rising generation, of early and deeply impressing on the youthful mind the awful truths of religion. To instruct the
opening

opening understanding of childhood by such CHAP.
easy and gentle gradations as the mind is ca- II.
pable of receiving ; to ground them well in the
fundamental duties which they owe to God,
to their neighbour, and to themselves ; and to
acquaint them with the glorious truths revealed
in the gospel of our Saviour Christ : these are
undoubtedly objects of prime consideration, and
well deserving the utmost care and attention.

In the course of this year he composed, and
presented to Mrs. Thornton, who seems already
to have entertained an high opinion of him,
a manuscript of sixty pages, quarto, containing,
“*Catechistical Notes on the Apostles Creed* ;”
which, if we consider the writer was only a
little turned of twenty-one years when he com-
posed it, is certainly a very learned work.

He seems to have sat down with a laudable
resolution of sparing neither pains or expence
to render himself eminent in his profession,
and he purchased about this time an inter-
leaved Old and New Testament in two vo-
lumes, which he began to fill with the most
judicious observations, from the ancient fathers,
modern commentators, and his own well-stored
mind.

CHAP.

II.

He does not seem to have been happy in having many men eminent for their learning in his neighbourhood, but the few there were of this sort appear to have been anxious to cultivate an acquaintance with him.

We find that in this year, if not before, he held a correspondence with Doctor Peter Samwaies, rector of Bedale, in Yorkshire, who was a person of great piety and distinguished erudition, as appears from a few of his letters, which have hitherto withstood the assaults of time.

There is extant a letter of this gentlemen, which is dated from Bedale, the 2d of January, 1665, containing some acute criticisms and learned remarks on the credit of what is called the Septuagint translation. Doctor Samwaies seems to have understood the Hebrew language extremely well, and Mr. Comber had attained a remarkable proficiency therein.— Though this is the first, from its date, that is preserved of Dr. Samwaies's letters (and indeed the *first* from any of Mr. Comber's numerous correspondents, that hath come down to these times) yet the acquaintance must have been of some considerable standing, as the doctor seems to

to honour his young friend with a considerable share of his friendship, as appears from the conclusion of this letter, which runs in these terms : “ But more of these matters when you come, which the sooner the better : you shall *alwaies** be welcome hither.”

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II.

An excellent talent for epitomizing seems to have been a gift which was bestowed upon him in a remarkable manner, and he employed it on all the best books that made their appearance in his time. It is not however surprising, that he, who was so good a paraphrast, should be a celebrated epitomizer likewise ; for clearness of conception, as to what is superabundant in one view, and deficient in another, will enable a man to paraphrase and epitomize, even the same work, with singular advantage. It not unfrequently happens that the sense of an author requires dilating, as the rays of the sun are by means of a prism, at other times it may be necessary to reduce it into a narrower compass, as the same rays are brought to a focus by the interposition of a burning glass.

* The editor hath carefully preserved the *orthography* of the original papers, from which he hath taken extracts.

CHAP.

II.

1666.

In the month of May, in the year 1666, he set off to Cambridge, and performed the exercise for his degree of M. A. by which he acquired great credit, as might naturally be expected from the laudable manner in which he had spent his time since he left the university.— On the 26th of May, 1666, his grace was past for this degree, in his own college. He does not mention his old friend and tutor Mr. Matthews, so that, in all probability, that gentleman was absent from the university.

Having business in London, which required his presence, he took the opportunity of going there in the interval betwixt the time of his grace being passed in his college, and the public commencement. On his arrival in town, he met his brother, who with his wife had just recovered from the plague, but *all* their children had fallen sacrifices to it.

His affairs in London being dispatched, he determined to pay a visit to his relations in Kent, who, we need not doubt, were above measure delighted with this unexpected pleasure, and particularly his mother, for whom, to her latest moment, he retained the most lively affection. During his continuance at
Westerham,

Westerham, the plague broke out so violently CHAP.
at Cambridge, that the commencement was ^{II.}
obliged to be put off, and he was admitted to
his degree of M. A. by proxy, a friend and
contemporary of his, Mr. John Carter, per-
forming the part of his representative on that
occasion. This is perhaps the reason why the
industrious Dr. William Richardson could
not find that he subscribed,

CHAP. III.

From the time of Mr. Comber's taking the degree of M. A. to the year 1673, when his first child was born.

CHAP.
III.
1666.

HIS old friend and patron, Mr. Holland, having always had a very sincere regard for him, and being desirous of rewarding his merit as far as lay in his power, generously offered him, about this time, the rectory of Wakering, in Essex, worth about 80l. per annum in those days; but he having hopes of obtaining Stonegrave, and having moreover cast eyes of affection on the eldest daughter of his friend Mr. Thornton, declined this kind offer.

Having passed as much time as possible with his friends in Kent, he returned in Yorkshire, and arrived, after a pleasant journey, safe at Mr. Thornton's house the 7th of June.

That gentleman taking into consideration Mr. Comber's merit, his own bad health, the necessity of a man of prudence and steadiness to take care of his affairs in case of his death, and his declining advantageous proposals made
to

to him in the south, at length approves of his affection for his eldest daughter ; but stipulates, with great propriety, for a delay of some years, on account of her tender age. He answers, like the patriarch of old, “ He would willingly serve for her seven years :” thus susceptible and retentive of a delicate passion for the virtuous part of the fair-sex, are men of the most pious habits oftentimes found to be.

During his absence in his late journey, Mr. Bennet had visited his living of Stonegrave, and being at Mr. Thornton’s house whilst he staid in the country, was prevailed upon by Mr. Comber’s friends to resign in his favour. To solicit the acceptance of this resignation, in the month of November, Mr. Comber waits upon the Archbishop of York, in London ; but the Archbishop of Canterbury fearing Mr. Bennet would look up to him for preferment, opposed it ; so that after great trouble, expence, and disappointment, he returned without success into Yorkshire. He remarks, that in this journey to London, “ he saw the cellars still smoaking from the late dreadful fire,” which had made such destruction in that noble city.

This

CHAP.

III.

This awful visitation of the city of London by fire, like the late one by pestilence, was considered by the divines of the established church, in those days, as most affecting calls to national repentance, for crying *impiety* and *debauchery* both of the court and country, but especially of the former, in which wit seemed to triumph most when employed against virtue, religion, and common decency. As a proof of this observation, it is a notorious fact, that a nobleman, high in the favour of his sovereign, but of singularly flagitious life and memory, went to such an unparalleled length of impiety and blasphemy as to publish about this time, “A Satire against Man.” This shameless prostitution of abilities to the service of irreligion and vice, so greatly excited the just zeal and indignation of our young divine, that he composed a very keen and spirited poem on that writer; thus *early evincing* his love of virtue, and his hatred of vice.

The right honourable John, Lord Frescheville, Baron of Stavely, half-brother to Mrs. Thornton's mother, Alice, daughter of Sir Hewit Osborne, appointed Mr. Comber his chaplain,

chaplain, about the month of December, in this year. This nobleman appears from his numerous letters still extant, some of which were written at a very advanced period of life, to have been possessed of great abilities. He was an officer of courage and reputation, and the productions of his pen breath the noble and generous spirit of that character. From his lordship's intimacy with the two archbishops, and other eminent divines of that day, as well as from the encomiums liberally bestowed upon him in Mr. Comber's writings, we may venture to conclude, that in a reign of greater licentiousness, than either before or since hath disgraced the English annals, he was exemplary in his principles and conduct, and had a proper sense of religion and the homage due to the Almighty Creator of all things. His lordship early found out Mr. Comber's merit, and being convinced of his worth on the most solid and convincing grounds, continued his patronage to him as long as he lived.

The only remains of his correspondence in this year, on learned, curious, or interesting subjects (which alone will find a place in this work), are, *first*, part of an epistle in verse, addressed to

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III.

CHAP. to Mrs. Alice Thornton, junior, when she was
III. at York for her education; *second*, a letter
from Dr. Samwaies, which contains a curious
account of the form of oaths, which the Romish
bishops are obliged to swear to the Pope, and
a general idea of the opinion which the *Papists*
entertain of the *Protestants*: *the third* is a copy
of a letter, in Mr. Comber's hand writing,
which is addressed to a *nameless* doctor, and
has no date, but seems to belong to this year,
and the original to have been sent to the rec-
tor of Bedale; its subject is the obstinacy of
Popish controvertists.

1667. Mr. Comber seems in this year very much
engaged in his attention to the fair object of
his virtuous passion, who was placed at York
to finish her education. Her mother, who
was an accomplished as well as pious lady,
being related to the daughters of the unfortu-
nate Lord Strafford, was educated with them
under the best masters, and had instructed her
daughter in every thing which could be
learned at home. He was permitted to visit
his mistress occasionally, and very frequently
wrote to her both in prose and verse. The ti-
tles of some of these poetical effusions are pre-
served

served by Mrs. Thornton's care, but the pieces themselves are unfortunately lost. We have reason to regret this, as, in all probability, the best specimens of his talents for poetry, would have appeared in them. It is a just observation of Dr. Jortin, that the best piece of Sir Thomas More's poetry, is that in which "his hand was secretary to his heart;" and the same observation, might, doubtless, be applied with equal propriety in the present case. There is reason to conclude, that about this time he wrote a very agreeable "*Sonnet, on the success which a man may hope to meet with in his addresses to the other sex;*" being, in all probability, inspired, at the time he penned it, by his own happy experience.

The greatest part of the month of July, in this year, he was afflicted with a fever, very different from that of love, and far more dangerous: when the violence of it was somewhat abated, he was advised to try the efficacy of the waters at Scarborough, and the sea-air, to aid him in the recovery of his strength. In pursuance of this advice, he set out for that place in the month of August, and in September was sufficiently recovered to wait upon his patron,
Lord

CHAP.

III.

CHAP. Lord Frescheville, at Stavely. The business
 III. of this visit seems to have been, to obtain his
 lordship's interest to assist him in procuring the
 living of Stonegrave; and this interest seems
 to have been effectually exerted in his favour.

The remains of his literary correspondence
 in this year are very small; there is, however,
 a copy of elegant verses, signed J. P. on the
 subject of his late fever, the title of which
 runs as follows. "Ad eruditissimum, et
 mihi amicissimum virum, Dom. Thomam
 Comber, sub febris specie laborantem, ne
 amoris flemmis correptus periculosior fiat
 morbus, Carmina parrænetica."

There is considerable merit in these verses,
 and many truly poetic ideas. The writer
 avails himself, like a true son of Apollo, of the
 adventitious circumstances of his friend's at-
 tachment to poetry, and his being at the same
 time enlisted in the service of the Cyprian god-
 dess. He takes occasion to observe, that, we
 are very apt to imagine *paleness* is an attribute
 which belongs to *poets*, but he fears, *the pre-
 sent fever proceeds from the flame of love.*

———"Febris
 Virginis igne."

This

This piece is dated, “E scholâ Coxowol-
denfi,” *from Coxwold school*, a celebrated
academy in the neighbourhood of Mr. Com-
ber’s residence; and if we consider it as a
juvenile poetic effusion of one of his young
friends, deserves considerable praise.

CHAP.
III.

This year is marked by great loss and gain
to our young divine, for he loses a valuable
friend, and gains an excellent wife.

1668.

William Thornton, esq; of East-Newton,
being at New-Malton, in Yorkshire, was
seized with a stroke of the cold palsy, and
died there the 17th of September, 1668.
Mr. Comber gives us his character in these
words. “He was a person of good learning,
great sobriety, and courteous temper; who,
though he was educated among the Presbyte-
rians, I had fully reconciled to the Church of
England long before his death.”

The strength of Mr. Thornton’s natural un-
derstanding was manifested, in his seeing
through the mist of education: and it appears,
from Mrs. Thornton’s papers, that he told her
during his courtship, “he was secretly a friend
to moderate episcopacy and monarchy.” His
learning appears to have laid principally in the
laws

CHAP. laws of his country ; and it is evident from
III. his collection of manuscripts, which are chiefly
on this subject, that he had studied them with
great attention and accuracy, during his con-
tinuance at the Temple.

He had, before this, had several shocks of the palsy, and the present, in all probability, proved fatal to his shattered constitution, from the unusually agitated state of his mind at that period ; for it appears, from letters and other documents, that he undertook this journey, “to vindicate the character of two of his nearest and dearest friends, who were traduced by a person of flagitious principles and manners.” Thus he fell a sacrifice to his sensibility, and lost his life in his endeavours to vindicate his friends.

He was buried in Stonegrave church, and Mr. Comber preached his funeral sermon, taking his text from Ecclesiastes xii. 1. In this composition, according to the fashion of the age, several Latin and Greek passages occur ; these, however, were afterwards printed in English. If it be considered this discourse was written more than a century since, and by a person under twenty-four years, it certainly afforded a
good

good presage of his more manly and improved style.

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His widow found herself in very unpleasant circumstances on the event of his death, for, besides the loss of an husband, who, as she feelingly expresses herself, “was her chief delight upon earth,” her only son was but six years old, her two daughters very young, and her estate burthened with high taxes and heavy debts. Under these circumstances, it appeared that a man of prudence and resolution, was absolutely necessary to support the credit of her house, and to assist her in the regulation of her perplexed affairs. In addition to these untoward circumstances, calumnious reports had been raised against Mr. Comber, by the venomous tongues of malicious and ungrateful persons, as appears from letters still extant; and in consequence of them, several of the late Mr. Thornton’s relations, had violently opposed his marrying that gentleman’s daughter, and one of them even proceeded so far, as to lay a plan of stealing her away from her mother. Mrs. Thornton, taking all these things into consideration, permitted him to take out a licence for a private marriage. This he

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did

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did with all dispatch, and, on the 17th of November, 1668, was married in the presence of very few witnesses, his bride not having completed her fifteenth year. With respect to the youth of the lady, perhaps he thought, in addition to the pressing reasons for a speedy marriage already mentioned, that the sooner we begin to bend the tree, the more easily it will take the ply we wish: if this was his opinion, the truth of it was manifested in his own case, by the uninterrupted happiness he enjoyed in the marriage state, during a period of more than thirty-one years.

He wrote a very elegant copy of verses to his bride on his wedding-day, in which he set forth the delicacy and tenderness of his passion. There is also a very agreeable sonnet, which he wrote sometime in this year, and addressed to his mistress, the title of which is, "*Good Counsel to modest Ladies, by T. C.*"

It appears, however, that he was not so attentive to other things, how material soever they might be to his happiness, as to forget the interests of learning, and especially of divinity.

He wrote a letter, which is dated the 2d of June, in this year, to the learned and industrious
Mr.

Mr. Pole, in his own name, and that of several other subscribers to his synopsis, encouraging him to proceed with courage and alacrity in that great work, and not to shorten it too much. This letter is so much to the purpose, and seems to have had such considerable influence on Mr. Pole as to prevail with him to adopt the advice it contains, that it is here given at full length.

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“ Reverend Sir,

“ The first account we receiv’d of your ingenious undertaking, did so exceedingly please us, that we resolv’d to take the first opportunity to expresse our great valed for so worthy a designe, by our ready subscriptions, and our utmost endeavours to encourage others. Nor were we ever the more backward for Mr. C. Bee’s opposition, but ever believ’d these delays might be advantageous both to you and to us, as being likely to afforde you more time for the polishing off so accomp. a peice, than the importunate desires of your friends to have it publish’d, would have allowed you, if there had been no impediment. Wherefore, though none could more importunately desire it finish’d than we,

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yet we would rather deny ourselves the satisfaction of those desires, than have the synopsis want that exacte survey which it must needs gaine by lyinge so long under your industrious hands : and we question not, but many things tending to make it more compleate and usefull, will by this means occur to your minde. But our greatest hopes are, that by this means you will gaine time to make *an exacte indexe* to the whole ; the want of which in Mr. Bee's crit. we, and all our acquaintance that ever us'd them, are sorely sensible of. Though you infinitely exceed them in the convenience of your method, yet we are apt to feare (if you now omit it) the usefulness of it also in your synopsis will afterwards so far appear, as to put some upon the contrivance of it, who will have neither the opportunity nor ability that you have to compose it, which will as well be prejudicial to yourselfe as to your subscribers. We cannot imagine how any person that would know all that is said of the same head, shall guesse where this word or phrase is explained, unlesse by tedious references at every place where the said word or phrase shall be repeated : and if you shall dispose

pose your observations to those texts where your authors handle them, we humbly conceive many of them will be undiscover'd without the help of an indexe. We chose rather to run the hazard of putting those lines into your hands, than to suffer a matter of this moment to be forgotten, while the sheets are as yet but preparing for the impression. That which made us most unwilling to present these considerations, was the trouble they will devolve upon you in the composition, though it should be deferred to the last of all: but we hope you will be pleased to consider the vast trouble you will hereby save many hundreds of your friends, and the great obligations you will lay upon all those, whose affections and prayers you always have with your worke: and, by the inclinations to this indexe we find in all our acquaintance, we are bold to promise you, it will be extremely acceptable to all.

“ Sir, we think it not improbable that your laborious and judicious collections should swell under your hands, so as to leave a reserve for a fourth volume, which your friends here desire; rather than that any thinge necessary shoulde be omitted or obscur'd by

CHAP. too much brevity : and we believe if you
III. please to add an indexe to this fourth volume,
there are none of your subscribers, but would rather advance double the price of that addition, than lose so considerable an advantage to the whole.

“ If the indexe should not make the fourth volume proportional to the rest, we make bold to request, that you woulde contrive to introduce, a briefe series of the harmony, order, and chronology of the whole bible, and adde a briefe account of those useful and excellent discourses, in the beginninge of the polyglotte, and end of the crit. maj. aboute versions, weightes, measures, customs, &c. which, if they coulde be inserted, woulde adde a greate lustre to this excellent worke, and make it the moste comprehensive and usefull piece of this nation that ever was written on holy scripture. But we leave this as an appendix to our former proposal, which we (knowing you are not deterred by the difficulty of any designe) have some good hopes you may please to consider off ; and however our desires to be unknown make us conceal our names, yet, if you shall honour us with the returne of a few lines,

lines, without any superscription, inclos'd in a
 cover to Mr. H. E. Crox, in Peter-gate, CHAP.
III.
 Yorke, who is also one of your subscribers, it
 will come safe to our hands. In the mean
 time we commit yourselfe and labours to the
 blessinge of the Almighty, and whether
 knowne or conceal'd, we humbly request you
 to esteeme us, though but in the inferior classes
 of them that professe themselves,

Your hearty well wishers

Ebor. June 2d, And faithful servants,
 MDCLXVIII. PHILO-POLOI."

Whether the above letter was answered according to the request contained therein, or not, does not appear; but the advice it gives was complied with, for the work, which was originally designed to have been comprized in *three volumes*, is extended to what may justly be called *five*, for though the last is called the latter part of the fourth volume, it is equal in size to the rest. Mr. Pole, in a letter or advertisement, prefixed to his last volume, declares, that though he had much retrenched his materials, he had constantly kept in view,

CHAP. what is recommended in the above letter, as
III. the chief use and intention of an index.

The publication of Mr Pole's synopsis, did not however slacken his exertions to enrich and encrease his collection for his own private use, for about this time, finding his interleaved Old and New Testament grew too full to admit the many observations he wished to preserve, he purchased a new one on the same plan, and proceeded to fill it with the most judicious observations.

1669. Thinking it no longer necessary to conceal his marriage, on the 17th of May, 1669, he invited some few relations of the late Mr. Thornton, to Newton, publickly notified his marriage to them, and gave them such reasons for not making it known before, as proved perfectly satisfactory.

There is extant a long letter from Mrs. Thornton to Mr Comber's mother, dated January 23, 1669, on the subject of his marriage to her daughter, which contains many expressions of esteem and regard for him, and many pious wishes that it may prove happy to them both. On the subject of her daughter's

daughter's youth, Mrs. Thornton writes in these terms. "For my daughter's too young yeares to enter into the world, I confesse they render her more incapable of this estate, and me lesse willing to enter her therein, where is requir'd a great deale more of wisdom and understanding to steer our course than her experience will afford, therefore, I could have wished a longer stay, if it might have suted my sonne's desires. But, I hope, his affection and prudence, will paliate such things as time and experience must polish. In the interim, my caire and endeavours while they are under my rooffe, joined with her true affection, shall not be wanting to render her an acceptable wife."—On the subject of keeping the marriage private, Mrs. Thornton has these words. "As for the publishing our match, we do not judge it convenient, till some remote friends of qualitie be acquainted, and in regard of my so late widdowed condition, I deeme it rather more prudent to conseale it to the world."—Mrs. Thornton, after reciting some matters of a private nature, concludes her epistle, of which this copy is written in her own hand, and properly endorsed, with suitable

CHAP. III. } able expressions of esteem for her correspon-
dent.

In the month of June, in this year, Lord Frescheville prevailed upon the Archbishop of York*, to accept the resignation of Stonegrave, and with the interest of many other friends, procured a presentation of Mr. Comber, under the great seal, on the 3d of October. The presentation arriving at Newton, on the 7th instant, found him confined to his bed with a violent fever; but his strength was restored to him, in a manner which he considers as providential, for, on his arrival at Bishopthorpe, his grace was just on the wing for London, and thus he was saved a troublesome and expensive journey. He obtained institution to Stonegrave, on the 9th, and was inducted on the 12th of October, by his friend, the Rev. Charles Man, now rector of Scawton.—It appears that Mr. Bennet, the late rector of Stonegrave, died within two months after his resignation, and almost as soon as his successor was fixed in it.

1670. On the 14th of April, in this year, he set out for London, to pay his first fruits, and

* Dr. Richard Sterne.

visit his friends; and he ascribes it to the superintending care of Providence, that he was preserved from many dangers in this journey; but he does not inform us of what particular nature those dangers were: he arrived, however, at last, safely, in Yorkshire, the 18th day of May.

His father, being called by business to Harwich, was there arrested by the hand of death, on the 1st day of February, and was buried in the church-yard of that place. We are not informed of the immediate cause of his sudden death, but his son does not forget to shed pious tears over his grave. He derives a source of great consolation, from the pious reflexion, that he had taken every opportunity in his power of alleviating his afflictions, especially such as the iniquity of the times had laid on him for his loyalty.

On the last day of February, Mrs. Alice Burton, Mr. Comber's grandmother on the mother's side, departed this life at Westerham, in Kent, being more than fourscore years old. This lady lived to see sixty-six persons, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, the issue of herself and one husband.

On

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On the 21st of April, in this year, he contracted an happy friendship with Mr. Joseph Lane, of the Middle Temple, afterwards comptroller of London; which being grounded on the principles of piety, the only sure foundation of a lasting friendship, soon encreased to such a degree, that they addressed each other by the endearing name of brother. He acknowledges, with marks of sincere regard, that he was indebted greatly to the conversation, letters, advice, and disinterested friendship of this excellent person; and indeed the numerous letters from Mr. Lane, that are extant at this day, make it evident that such a friend could not be too-highly valued. His writings prove him to have been possessed of a clear head and sound judgment, which rendered him perspicacious in affairs of this world, sincere in those which regard another.

In the spring of this year, his lady had been attacked with a dangerous fever which continued till midsummer, when it pleased God to restore her health; for which mercy he returns solemn thanks to Almighty God.

Amongst the very considerable remains of his literary correspondence which have descended

scended to these times, there does not occur CHAP.
any thing in this year which deserves to find ^{III.}
a place in these memoirs.

His mother being set at liberty from the 1671.
pious care of attending upon an aged parent,
determined to pay a visit to her son, and arrived
in Yorkshire on the 29th May, in this year.
The whole family unite in requesting her to
make some considerable stay in the north ; as,
although she had been the chief instrument
under heaven, of procuring her son an academi-
cal education, which, owing to the rebellious
times, was attended with considerable diffi-
culty ; yet she never had an opportunity till
the present, of paying him a visit since he left
the university.

In the summer of this year, Mr. Comber
finished the first part of his "*Companion to the
Temple,*" and transmitted it to his friend Mr.
Lane, to agree with a bookseller concerning
the printing it. Mr. Lane addressed a letter to
him on this subject, which bears date the 5th
of October, 1671, reciting certain difficulties
which had occurred in the prosecution of this
intention : he, however, vindicates the sincerity
of his friendly exertions to expedite the busi-
ness

CHAP. III. { nefs in these strong words: “I dare affirm, that had an 100l. been propos’d to me as a reward to have speeded it, I could not have made more haste, unlesse my fancy had outrun my own and friend’s judgement and discretion.” He concludes himself, his “ready, faithful, and entirely loving friend and servant.”

On the 9th of November, Mr. Lane addressed another letter to him on this subject.—Amongst other things he mentions his becoming acquainted with a relation of our author, and adds, “it will really be my ambition to wait upon, or serve, any of the friends or relatives, of friends so dear to me, that, were I master of my time, *I would as gladly come to York to visit, as go to Westminster Hall to receive a fee.*” There are few readers but will acknowledge, that Mr. Lane’s expression on this occasion, denotes no inconsiderable degree of the *sui desiderium*; that it marks no ordinary warmth of true and disinterested friendship.—The writer himself desires his correspondent to remark, that “all his families have reference to the law.” He appears to have been at this period just setting out in his profession, for he desires to be recommended “to an honest attorney,

torney,

torney, or solicitor." He adds, "God make CHAP.
III.
me as honest, diligent, and circumspect, as I
have hitherto been, even beyond my hopes,
successful." He concludes this epistle in this
warm and energetic language: "I doe very
often remember, and pray, and give thanks for
you ; and I should mourn, *as for the loss of a
brother*, the declination of your friendship and
love, I had almost said of your letters, to,

Dear friend,

Your's in treble bonds,

JO. LANE."

Our author begins his account of the 1672.
transactions of this year with the following
melancholy narrative of his mother's illness:
"While she was preparing to return into her
own country, she first fell into an ague at
Candlemas, and then into a fever about Easter,
which proved fatal to her, and gave me an op-
portunity, with mighty sorrow, to close the eyes
of the most affectionate mother in the world."
He proceeds to characterize her in the follow-
ing terms. "She was a person of great un-
derstanding, lovely aspect, and admirable piety,
and so tender of me, that her whole life was
dedicated to my improvement in learning and
virtue ;

CHAP. virtue; and I believe no son and mother did
III. ever more entirely love each other, nor did I
ever know any thing touch my heart so near
as her death."

Ye sons and daughters of sensibility! whom nature hath cast in a feeling mould, pause for a moment, and contemplate this artless and affecting picture of poignant woe! disdain not to drop a sympathetic tear, and partake of the feeling distress of him who could pour forth these tender effusions of filial piety!!

He proceeds in these words: "Among many other memorable things of this excellent woman, to whose piety and virtue I owe all that religious education which seasoned my youth, and all those first steps to future preferment, one remarkable circumstance must not be forgot, that, whereas she always feared the stroke of death, and ever begged of God for strength to bear it like a Christian, she died without any visible torment, and told me not many minutes before, she was neither sick nor in pain." He adds, "She quietly and gently fell asleep in the Lord, while I was recommending her blessed soul into her Redeemer's hands."

Such

Such is the account which he gives us of the peaceful and happy end of his last surviving parent ; and he informs us, that, a considerable time before this event, he had composed some "*Considerations about the Fears of the Pains of Death*," for the pious purpose of fortifying his mother's mind against the apprehensions, she had *always* entertained, of the great pain which accompanies the separation of the soul and body. CHAP.
III.

This amiable lady died on the 13th of May, 1672, and on the 15th of the same month was buried at the right hand of the altar, at Stonegrave church : an handsome stone was laid over her, and a brass plate upon it, on which is engraved an elegant Latin inscription, composed by her son, with her arms and pedigree on the margin.

Grief for this loss (which even the most pious persons cannot always restrain upon such trying occasions) brought another dangerous fever upon him, the ill effects of which he did not recover till the following August. During this illness, the *first part* of his work entitled, "*A Companion to the Temple*," came out. He remarks, that his mother, to her abundant
F comfort,

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comfort, had read several parts of this work, and had other parts of it read to her. He also observes, "that he owed this, as well as the other parts which he afterwards published, to his retirement at East Newton, where he daily us'd the Common-Prayer;" and it is very likely that this frequent use of it, induced him to analyze and consider it more minutely.

His modesty on the occasion of this his first publication was so great, that he would not venture to commit it to the press without the able advice of skilful divines and unprejudiced friends. He addressed a letter to the learned and judicious Dr. Tillotson, requesting his candid opinion of the work which accompanied it: and to avoid any favourable prejudice, which might arise from a knowledge of the name or person of the author, he concealed himself under the name of Philo-Irenæus.

The chief design of this work appears to have been, *to reconcile protestant dissenters to the Church of England*, that all might exercise piety in peace. To promote this design, he wrote a copy of verses, and on the same paper sketched out a drawing which was intended as an head piece to it, which was as follows:

On

On one side of an altar is a person praying ; CHAP.
on the other, *Truth*, with her name on her ^{III.}
girdle, holds with her right hand, *the liturgy*
of the Church of England, and in the other, *the*
Word of God. An hand from a cloud holds
a sun above the altar, which pours *heat* on the
person praying, and *light* on the *liturgy*. Be-
low are seen a Popish priest leading a soldier to
a crucifix on one side, and a person on the
other, *undermining the seat of Truth*.

Of the whole of this work, which reflects
immortal honour on its author, it may truly be
said, it is the best on the subject, Dr. Wheatley
and others who followed, having borrowed, to
say no more, their best part from hence. The
answers to objections against particular parts
of the liturgy which are given in it, are as in-
genious as any of a later date ; and it must be
acknowledged, that his analysis of the Com-
mon-Prayer reflects equal honour on the com-
pilers of the liturgy, and him that explained
and commented on it. The great number of
passages which he hath quoted from ecclesiastic,
and even profane writers, prove, that the circle
of his reading was very extensive ; but it can-
not be denied, that it is not calculated for the

CHAP. very lowest class of readers, such words as
 III. *mystery, symbol, &c.* being quite unexplained.

Sometime in this year, a sacred drama of John Fox made its appearance, said to be published by T.C. M.A. of Sydney College, Cambridge. The title of this piece was, *Christus triumphans*, and it was designed to introduce it into public schools. These initials were thought by many judicious persons to stand for *Thomas Comber*, and the intention of its publication was worthy of him, but, as no memorandum whatsoever of this appears among such of his manuscripts as are now extant, we cannot vouch for its being brought out by him.

The remains of his literary correspondence in this year, afford nothing sufficiently interesting to engage the public attention.

1673. The transactions of this year, which he has left upon record, are exceeding few : he seems to have been engaged in a course of close study, and in a faithful discharge of his ministerial duty. He appears however to have held a correspondence with several literary men, and there is extant a copy of his letter to the Rev. Mr. Carville, in his own hand-writing, which is an answer to that gentleman's enquiry about the institution of

of the Christian sabbath. He gives it as his opinion, that the authority by which we now observe the Lord's day, is built on the following grounds.—First, by the *law of nature*, we must have some solemn time to worship God in publicly.—Secondly, the fourth commandment instructs us this time must be *one day in seven*, and Christians must not give God less honour than the Jews did.—Thirdly, but because the *last day of the week* was appropriated by God to the Jewish œconomy, and referred to their deliverance from Ægypt: when the Mosaic rites lost their obliging power, viz. at our Saviour's resurrexion, *this particular day was no longer necessary*, unless some new sanction had re-established it.—Fourthly, we read of no law either of Christ or his apostles in writing, to fix any one day in particular; only we find the apostles and first Christians always assembled *on the first day of the week*, and ordered collections upon it, because, on this first day of the week, *Christ arose from the dead*, and *usually appeared to them*, and at length *poured out his spirit upon them*; so that the fathers ordinarily say, the Sunday was consecrated to us *by Christ's resurrexion*. He takes a view of

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the manner in which this day was observed in the first ages of the church, immediately after the times of the apostles, and after the two first centuries; he also comments on the manner in which it hath been noticed by the canons of the church, and by imperial decrees. After a variety of learned and curious observations on this subject, which are too long to be inserted here, he concludes with remarking, that “the age is too prone to neglect divine things, and what is for their soul’s good; so that the clergy had need beware they do not by their principles or practice, indulge the loose humour of the times, least they hinder true piety, bring a scandal upon the church, and become partakers of other men’s sins. Finally,” says he, “it is incumbent on the ministers of our Saviour’s religion to shew, that it is the duty of all Christians *to spend this day to the Lord*, which was undoubtedly the design of its institution; that this conduct will be most advantageous to our eternal salvation, and that one day in seven is little enough to look after the affairs of eternity.”

Mr. Hague, master of Coxwold school, addressed a Latin epistle to our author, on the 2d
of

of November, in this year, concerning certain *liturgic* words; from which it appears, the writer was both a good scholar, and had access to an excellent library of Lord Fauconberg, at Newborough, in that neighbourhood.

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There is extant a letter from the Rev. William Mompeston, which is dated the 19th of December, in this year. Its contents are merely of a private nature, but the writer expresses sincere regard for his correspondent.—He seems to have been related to Mrs. Thornton's family, but whether by consanguinity or affinity, is not certain; and in consequence of Mr. Comber's alliance by marriage with the same family, addresses him by the name of "Cofin," as was very much the fashion in those days. Whether this is the same gentleman that wrote to Mr. Holland some years before for a curate to Stonegrave, cannot be clearly ascertained: he seems however to have been well acquainted with Mr. Lane, whom he mentions in this letter, and styles him, "our friend."

It appears from a letter of our author addressed to Mrs. Thornton, in this year, that Lord Frescheville settled a pecuniary trans-
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action

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action of that lady, which was near being carried into a court of justice, owing to the perverseness of her opponent : Mr. Comber seems, from this epistle, to have entered warmly and effectually into his mother-in-law's interests.

On Wednesday the 10th of December, in this year, his lady was delivered of her first child, a son, which died almost as soon as it was born. We cannot doubt this was a very severe trial both to the father and mother, who, as soon as they had experienced the delightful sensation of parental feelings, were immediately deprived of their child. But though it pleased Providence to lay this affliction upon him, his natural piety made him submit with patience to the trying dispensations of Heaven, whenever it was necessary for him to sustain them. On the present occasion he exclaims with true Christian piety and resignation, "the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." He remarks, "the child died unbaptized, except by the prayers and tears of its disconsolate parents," and then adds, "he returned again to his heavenly Father : " so entirely was he free from the barbarous theology of Austin.

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From the birth of his first child to his taking the degree of D. D.

ON the 26th of January, in this year, our CHAP. IV. author's *second book* on the Common-Prayer was published, called "*A Companion to the Temple, part II.*" in subsequent editions of his works, it made *third part* part on that subject. 1674.

He informs us, that in the beginning of this year, a little tract made its appearance, called "*Advice to the Roman Catholics;*" to which he did not prefix his name. He piously hopes "it may bring back erring brethren to the fold, and illuminate and kindle the piety of true believers." It must be confessed, that nothing could possibly be more affectionate than this wish, and those who have read this excellent little piece, will readily own, that nothing could be more promotive of it, than the matter which is contained therein.

It is very likely he chose to conceal his name, least the knowledge of its being written by a professor of the reformed religion should create

CHAP. create a prejudice against it in the minds of
IV. those whom he particularly desired should peruse it ; but it is a little surprizing he did not make some note or memorandum of the occasion of its being written. The only light we can throw upon this fact, is deduced from family tradition, which informs us it was as follows :

The Lady Fauconberg, who was daughter of the Protector, Oliver Cromwell, notwithstanding her father's religious tenets and the education which she had in his principles, was zealously attached to the Church of England. Our author, who lived in the neighbourhood, visited the family. Her ladyship informed him that certain Popish emissaries had endeavoured to seduce the mind of her lord, and requested his assistance to counteract their ill designs.— In pursuance of this request, he endeavoured in conversation to remove the scruples which his lordship entertained to a longer continuance in the communion of the Church of England ; and, at his particular request, committed to paper the substance of what he had spoken upon this subject at different times ; probably adding any further matter which occurred to him

him as he wrote. These few sheets gave entire satisfaction to his lordship, who requested him to make them public, at the same time promising to remember his interest if any opportunity should present itself wherein he could be useful to him. This promise was most religiously kept, his lordship having both the opportunity and inclination of serving him in more than one signal instance in the future periods of his life.

But whatever might be his inducement to write the above tract, he says, that he was induced to publish it in consequence of the penal laws being put in execution against Papists. Probably he thought, that, in proportion to the severity with which they were treated, they would be inclined to examine with attention the opinions for which they suffered. At all events no one will deny him the merit of great humanity for his intentions in behalf of the suffering Papists.

This *first edition* had prefixed to it, "A letter to his honoured and worthy friend Mr. S. B." in which he greatly commends "his zeal and charity in behalf of his countrymen of the Roman communion;" and thinks it "an excellent

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excellent piety, to endeavour to reduce those into the right way who are *so confident* in the wrong." In the latter part of the letter he says, "that I may answer your desires, and contribute my poor assistance to so pious and generous a design, I have sent you the following papers, wherein the delusions of that party are discovered as plainly, yet as modestly as may be, that they may see in a little room, how much it is their interest to embrace *the true catholic religion* of the English church." "I know," says he, "all these particulars have been more fully handled by better pens, but most of these writings have been by way of dispute, and intended rather to convince than persuade." He has a pertinent observation on the small size of his book: "There are many," says he, "who through unavoidable business, company, or other divertisements, either want leisure or inclination to read a larger volume, who may yet be prevailed with to spare one hour for so small an abstract as this." "The style," he justly observes, "is as mild as the matter would allow, and can give no *just offence* to any, &c." To his praiseworthy desire of alluring Popish readers to
peruse

peruse his book, we must ascribe his giving CHAP.
the name of Roman-Catholic to Papists, which IV.
can only be countenanced by custom, the two
words signifying directly opposite meanings,
viz. *particular—universal*.

As to the performance itself nothing can be more judicious, candid, and conciliating, than the terms in which it is conceived. To convince a numerous and bigotted set of men, that the religion which they profess, and for which they are so extremely zealous, hath its fundamental and striking peculiarities, founded absolutely in *error* and *deception*, it must be confessed is an arduous undertaking; and yet our author hath done this, in a manner which can give offence to none but the most malicious professors of that religion.

The mild and conciliating language which runs through the introduction, which is a master-piece of close and accurate reasoning, cannot fail to give the reader the most favourable prepossession of what comes after, and is consequently greatly advantageous to his cause. He addresses them, by the affectionate title of “friends and countrymen,” and proceeds to to take notice of the many inconveniences they
laid

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laid under by reason of their adherence to those opinions which Rome calls religion, and which were not only observed by others but also complained of, even by themselves. He says, that, “how far some of their own persuasion may have contributed to bring these inconveniences upon them, he will not take upon him to judge; for he esteems it a more charitable employment, to free them from those *sad effects*, which they complain of, than either to enquire into the nation’s general antipathy to their religion, or to dispute about the occasion thereof; wherefore, while some accuse their practices, and others deride their worship, he has so much affection for their persons, as being his countrymen, and so much charity for their souls, as bearing the name of Christians, that he will present them with some useful advice.”

“’Tis true,” he says, “the common apprehension concerning them, might almost discourage such an attempt, it being generally believed that a Roman-Catholic’s prejudice is invincible, but, for his part, he thinks of them far more favourably.” He takes notice of the opinion of a learned father of the church, that,
“it

“it is not the part of a wise man to be en-
slaved to a received opinion, but to labour to
find out the truth:” and he himself thinks,
“it is a zeal without knowledge, and a foolish
obstinacy, to be very confident of that which
we never have fairly examined.”

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He says, “he easily believes their spiritual
guides will esteem no sin more mortal, than to
enquire into those principles which they re-
ceive from them; and that they will scarce
allow them the liberty to peruse a few lines,
presented by *so charitable an hand*.” These
prohibitions, however, he thinks, “should
make them more suspicious and inquisitive, and
put them upon *trying that coin which shuns
the touchstone*, knowing, that truth seeks no
corner, and that which is real fears no test.”—
He then proceeds to shew the different con-
duct of the Church of England, which he ob-
serves, “puts no restrains of this kind upon
her adherents, neither is she afraid to have her
doctrine tried by scripture, and genuine anti-
quity, since she finds those are her best sons
who have enquired most narrowly. All he
shall ask of them,” he says, “is to search im-
partially, whether the doctrines wherein they
differ

CHAP. differ from the church of England, deserve so
IV. firm an assent as they give them, and he that
dares not do this, is not a *disciple* but a *slave*."

He thinks, "it is very likely that when they come to understand their principles thoroughly, they will discern they do not deserve to be retained at so dear a rate; and that it is possible, they will resolve to quit their mistaken opinions, and real sufferings, at the same time: but that if their enquiry should not have this happy effect, it will at least convince them that their religion is not a *blind* and *accidental choice*; and will not only teach them to be more moderate in their censures of others, but likewise vindicate them, from what was laid to the charge of the old Samaritans, that they worshipped they knew not what."

Having thus cleared his way for the investigation of the peculiar doctrines of the Romish church, he proceeds to lay open the corruptions, and to detect the errors of that religion in a very masterly and unanswerable manner. This little tract, though concise, is so very much to the purpose, and carries such weight in its arguments, that the lovers of truth

truth cannot possibly set too high a value upon it. It never was *effectually* answered during the life of its author, but an attempt of this kind was made in the reign of James II. which was so unskilfully conducted, that it only tended to expose the cause which it attempted to defend. CHAP.
IV.

By this time it appears our author's reputation was pretty well established, and his interest with several men in power was considerable. One Mr. John Garnett addressed a letter to him, about this time, conceived in very humble terms, and requesting his interest to procure him any situation that he thought him equal to: the writer informs him, "he is oblig'd to hang upon his friends, as he hath not wherewithal to live;" and in the conclusion, "begs him to excuse his boldness, as he hath no other refuge to fly to in his distress." From this letter it is fair to conclude, that the writer of it was convinced he possessed together with the power the inclination also of rendering him effectual assistance, or he would not have ventured to address it to him.

The Rev. John Garthwait, who probably was chaplain to the Archbishop of York, ad-

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dressed

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dress'd a letter to him dated from Bishopthorpe the 28th of May, in this year, in which he informs him, that Mr. Davison, who was to have preached the ordination sermon, is prevented from carrying that intention into execution by indispensable business, which makes his presence necessary in London. He says, "if Mr. Comber will take that duty upon himself, he will thereby greatly oblige both the writer and his brother," and the reason of his troubling him on this subject is, because "he knows his abilities are such that he needs less warning than others." This epistle concludes with expressions of great respect.

In this year he was engaged in a friendly controversy with Mr. John Worsley, a learned and ingenious gentleman in his neighbourhood, on the subject of protestant non-conformity. There is extant a very long letter from him to this correspondent, in which he recites the substance of a conversation they had held a little time before on this subject; he reduces his opponent's arguments to three heads, he examines them by the texts of scriptures which are thought to countenance them; and proves they are founded on misapprehended passages of scripture,

ture, and selecting certain texts, without paying attention to what goes before, and what comes after, by which oversight the true meaning of them is overlooked. There is also a long answer to this letter of our author, in which his correspondent endeavours to vindicate and maintain his opinions, though with very unequal strength. There is a reply to this letter by our author, who uses much elaborate argument to convince him of his error, and by the great pains he hath taken in the controversy, must have considered his adversary, from his candour and learning, worthy of conviction.

There are extant several letters in this year from Lord Fauconberg and Lord Frescheville, in which those noblemen express themselves in terms of the warmest regard for him and his interests.

There is also a Latin epistle from the learned Dr. Basire, in this year, which appears to be in answer to one addressed some considerable time before to him by our author, for it is entitled, "Isaaci Basirii, S. Th. D. S. P. D. R^{do}. Cl. D. Thomæ Comber, pro responsione ferâ apologia." The learned doctor seems to take

CHAP. it for granted, that old-age is an excuse for
 IV. laziness ; (“ senescere me sentio, indéque etiam
 segnescere sentio.”) It is true the doctor like-
 wise pleads ill-health (“ adversâ valetudine
 colluctanti”) which is undoubtedly a more
 legitimate apology for his silence. The re-
 maining contents of this epistle, not treating
 on any curious or learned subject, do not merit
 any particular notice.

1675. On the 3d of January, 1675, our author's
 lady was safely delivered of a second son, and
 it is remarkable that this was also her own
 birth-day. The next day the child was pri-
 vately baptized, and two days after, on the
 6th, publickly received into the church. He
 was called *John*, and his sponsors were persons
 of distinction ; John, Lord Frescheville ; Sir
 Christopher Wandesforde, bart. who was Mrs.
 Thornton's brother ; and the lady of Sir John
 York, of Richmond, in Yorkshire, who had
 also been sponsor to the child's mother.

It is worthy of remark how careful Mr.
 Comber was, not to set his parishioners an ex-
 ample of delay in bringing his children to be
 baptized publickly in the church ; for he not
 only

only brought this, but those which he had afterwards, as soon as possible after they were born. CHAP.
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On the 14th of March, 1675, his *third book* on the common-prayer, viz. “On the Litany and Occasional Prayers,” which now makes *part second* of his complete comment on the liturgy, was published.

It has been remarked by many good judges that a book is seldom recommended by merely having been written in a short time; for if it is ill-wrote it is finished too soon—if well, no time is too long for its production. Yet when the intrinsic merit of a book is firmly established by the approbation of learned and judicious men, it is certainly a circumstance which recommends the industry and abilities of the author, that he produced it in a little time. The impartial reader will not, therefore, impute it to vanity (which was the farthest possible from his natural character) that he made a note of his having finished this work in the spare time of sixteen months, neither will it be thought a bad proof of his close attention and extensive erudition, if we consider how many other affairs he had to attend to, and

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how

CHAP. how many different authors he must have
IV. been intimately acquainted with, to enable
him to finish this piece in the manner he has
done.

Being much solicited by his numerous friends in London to spend some time with them, and being desirous of shewing the metropolis to his lady, they set out for that place the latter end of May; from thence they went to Westerham to visit his relations, and to introduce his lady to them, they being greatly prepossessed in her favour by the reports of her gentle and amiable manners.— Having staid in Kent as long as their affairs would permit, they returned safe into Yorkshire after a pleasant journey.

The learned Dr. Thomas Holbeck addressed a letter to our author, on the 3d of February, in this year, on the subject of some proposed additions to his preface to a new edition of the *Companion to the Temple*. After returning his thanks for Mr. Comber's "good prayers for his recovery," he proceeds thus: "to which I cannot but adjoine my best approbation of what you intende to add to the conclusion of your preface, both as to the clergy for
reading,

reading, and the laity for hearing, and observing with better devotion the prayers of the church : for which, that which you pleade is soe full and emphaticall, that if but perused and consider'd as I pray God it may, I hope will very much prevayle, both for a better esteeme and a better using of these pious offices. The Lord recompense you for, and bless, and prosper your soe well deserving labours ; and I make no question but he doth, since I find that good promise of his, “ *habenti dabitur,*” thus fayrely made good unto you in these performances.”

This year our author was employed in writing several tracts, of which an account will in their order be given in the sequel of these memoirs. 1676.

Lord Fauconberg had some time since given him a promise to assist him with his interest in procuring any living he would name, and on his desiring to have Thornton, on account of its nearness to Stonegrave, which was in the gift of Sir Hugh Cholmeley, knight, his lordship, with the assistance of the Earl of Danby, lord treasurer, and Lord Frescheville, obtained a promise of his being presented to it when

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vacant. Upon this subject many letters are extant in the preceding year to and from our author, both from Lord Frescheville, and Lord Fauconberg. On his addressing a letter of thanks to the latter for his exertions, in conjunction with the lord treasurer, in his behalf, and for the success with which those exertions were crowned, his lordship writes to him on the first of February, in this year, in the following terms:

“ Sir,

“ The last post brought me the civility of your acknowledgement, which I can by no means admit of as a due, since you are intitled by your owne meritt, to much more than my lord treasurer can doe, or I say for you. Be confident upon all occations, you shall find me readily dispos’d to doe you any good offices, conceiving the promotion of such persons as yourself reall services to the church. I congratulate the increase of your family, and the recovery of your lady; being, with much truth,

London,
Feb. 1st, 167⁵/₆.

and servant,
FAUCONBERG.”

The

The above letter requires no other comment CHAP.
IV. than just to remark it is a specimen, extracted from a vast many others, of the kind manner in which his lordship always addressed our author.

In the month of March, Sir Hugh Cholmeley addressed a letter to him, in which he promised him the next presentation to Thornton. Sir Hugh informs him, that “though he wanted not solicitations for Thornton, yet he had determined to keep himself free from all engagements to others, that after the death of the incumbent he (our author) might renew his pretences with more advantage than others.” He says, that, “though he was not willing to declare himself farther, yet he always fixed his thoughts upon him, in whom those circumstances meet that a man should desire, who seeks the good of the place and of the church, and he trusted no private interest should ever guide him otherwise. Besides the noble Lords Fauconberg and Frescheville,” says he, “who first gave me the knowledge of you, I did the last week receive a message from my lord treasurer, that the giving you this living would be acceptable to his lordship, and it is
to

CHAP. to this you owe my declaring the matter,
IV. which I had resolved in my own thoughts
should have continued unascertained whilst
the present incumbent was living, out of re-
spect to him, therefore, I wish my present de-
claration may be kept with some privacy.”
Sir Hugh concludes this letter, with expres-
sions of esteem and regard.

Lord Frescheville wrote to him on the
27th of April, that the lord treasurer had
just told him, that his majesty had promised
he should have the first prebend in Durham
that fell vacant. He further says, “his lord-
ship has undertaken to acquaint the Bishop of
Durham with his majesty’s gracious promise,
to the end that it may not be forgotten.”

The lord treasurer Danby was Mrs. Thorn-
ton’s cousin german, and at this time in very
great favour with Charles II. so that it was
no difficult matter to obtain such a promise
of his majesty.

Lord Frescheville addressed a second letter
to him on this subject the 23d of May, in
which he informed him, that “the Bishop
of Durham had greatly opposed the exe-
cution of the King’s promise, on pretence
of

of other engagements." On this occasion he gave a striking instance of modesty and inambition, in desiring the matter to be pressed no further. It is not, however, surprizing that Crew, who was justly suspected of being a *Papist in his heart*, should be so inimical to our author, who already had so greatly distinguished himself as the *champion of protestantism*. In some measure to console him for the disappointment of his promised preferment in the cathedral of Durham, his excellent patron, Lord Frescheville, wrote him word, that the Archbishop of York designed him the prebend of Holme, which was now vacant, but advised him not to be in haste, to be installed, as a better was intended for him, if any should fall vacant in a short time.

"*The Companion to the Temple*" being revised, corrected, and much improved, now made its appearance in its new dress, in a second edition.

A gentleman who signs himself W. R. having, as he mentions in this letter, a slight acquaintance with himself, and a much greater with his learned and laborious works, addressed a letter to him in this year, and sent him at the same time two curious pieces of
the

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CHAP. the late Dr. Richard Perrinchief, who had
IV. been rector of St. Mildred's in the Poultry,
prebend of Westminster, and sub-almoner to
King Charles I. He particularly mentions
certain verses in a late publication, which were
undoubtedly written by Charles I. the doctor
having been furnished with them by Mr.
Whitaker, secretary to the King, who had
been permitted by the regicides to accompany
his majesty during his confinement in Caris-
brook Castle.

The writer of this letter proceeds to inform
his correspondent of the reception his (our
author's) works met with from the public,
in the following words: "I hope it may not
be improper or offensive to give you a brief
account of the acceptance your labours ge-
nerallie find in this citie, (from an impartial
hand,) first from those of your own function.
To my knowledge divers off the eminent
clergie do highlie esteem them; one to whom
I had lent the second part of the Companion
to the Temple, quoted a passage in his sermon,
on the 30th of January, concerning praying
for a prince, &c. and has recommended divers
of qualitie to buy them, and is to have the
three

three volumes *chained* in his parish church, they having been trained up for many years great Calvinists. Another, a person of noble birth and an archdeacon, hath desir'd me to get the three volumes *so bound*, assuring me he will promote the use of them in his church, and divers who have had perusal of them, are become constant daily-prayer-men and women at St. Christopher's, which fills very much of late both morning and evening. The Dean of Saint Paul's, as I am informed, buys a dozen of them at a time, to bestow, as is believed, on the ministers he prefers in this citie. It is desir'd by divers, that you may make the nation so happy as to go through with the rest, which if you think fit to undertake, I pray God prosper, and enable you to perform to the advancement of his glory, the good of his church and nation, and the silencing the black mouth of calumnie and all prophaneness, the flourishing weeds of this age." The writer concludes his long epistle, with expressions of singular respect and esteem.

We cannot doubt but this testimony which was given by many men of worth and learning, to the value of his useful labours, for the honour

CHAP. honour of the protestant reformed religion,
IV. must have been highly gratifying to his feelings,
and have greatly animated his endeavours to complete the pious work which he had begun. But though, in general, wherever he made an acquaintance he likewise made a friend, (and in many instances as we shall see hereafter, his works procured him friends, amongst those who were strangers to his person,) yet, as the best man living cannot escape the shafts of malevolence and envy, so it fared with him as with others great and good men who have felt the poison of a slanderous tongue. There is extant a copy, in his own hand writing, of a letter he addressed to a person who had traduced his character, and blackened his reputation. If, to the advantage which virtue must ever have over vice, and truth over falsehood, we add also the support of his great abilities, and uncorrupted integrity, it is not at all surprising that this vindication of his injured innocence, should be a masterly performance. The following picture of our author's generous conduct towards his traducer, must fill every virtuous mind with indignation against him that could repay such kindness with ingratitude.

tude. "Time was," says our author, "when I
rid divers miles for you, and procured you the
convenience of travel, which yet you never
own'd as a favour : since that, I have vindicated
your cause to your sister's face, and highly
disoblig'd her by discourfing so earnestly for
you, I have also labour'd to reconcile my
Lord Frescheville to you and your concerns
by many arguments, but he always told me,
you were a person of so intolerable a temper
that Madam D. could scarce do lesse than shee
did in opposition to you, and fir, you have now
partly given a testimony of the truth of this
character ; however, *I have always taken your
part, and never denied you any favour in my
power,* though you are a gentleman I was never
oblig'd to, nor shall I ever desire any requitall
from you, but the same common respects that
strangers pay me. Certainly I have done
nothing to deserve your late unaccountable
rudeness, and therefore I can easily despise it,
but only I find you are under great mistakes
in reference to my condition, which I would
not give myselfe the trouble to rectify, but that
I would not have you so far expose yourselfe
as

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as to be the relater of such *notorious falsehoods*.”
He goes on to vindicate his family, education, and fortune, from the calumnies which had been cast upon them, and shews how ridiculous and vain his traducer’s impotent attempts were to blast his reputation, in these words: “After all I must desire you to consider that by God’s blessing I have the favour of the greatest of the nobility, and the best and most eminent churchmen in the kingdom, and am wholly out of the reach of your evil-will, having reputation among those whose opinion is most to be valew’d, and that so universall that your scurrilous speeches will not at all hurt me, neither shall they grieve me. You may publish your own ingratitude and envy, but can detract nothing from my character, so long as God assists me to go on in those ways in which I have begun: so that it may be, you may think it your wisest way to desist for your own sake, if not, *I pray God forgive you*, and give me grace to confute your slanders by my conversation. This is thought fit to be declared to you, from him that hath been

Your friend, THO. COMBER.”

On

On the 23d of April, 1677, he lost his only child, after a decline of half a year. He describes him, “as a child of great hopes;” and adds, “he left his parents in deep sorrow;” and he concludes some private meditations on this trying event, with this pious ejaculation; “The will of the Lord be done!”

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1677.

About this time he received a letter from Dr. Henry Watkinson, chancellor of York, who advised him, “for several reasons,” to accept the prebend of Holme, in preference to another which was shortly expected to be vacant. This letter and the doctor’s reasons, probably some of them given him afterwards in person, determined him to follow that advice.

He addressed a letter of thanks to the Archbishop of York on this occasion; of which, perhaps, the following copy, taken from a copy of the original one, in his own handwriting, yet extant, may not be unacceptable to the learned reader.

“May it please your grace,

“I am oblig’d to make the most grateful acknowledgements for the honour your grace hath done me, in so freely electinge me into
H your

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your colledge of prebendaries in your cathedrall church ; and your grace's kindness is the more valuable and engaging, in that you were pleased at soe greate a distance to have me in your thoughtes, who was as far from the purposes of asking such a dignitye, as from the apprehensions of any merit in myselfe to deserve it.

Ἐκ τῶν ἀέλπιτων ἡ χάρις μείζων βροτοῖς

Φανεῖσα μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν προσδοκωμένων. EURIP.

“ And I can affirm the most pleasinge circumstance in this donation is, that it is so faire an evidence of your grace's good opinion of me, and kindness for me, whiche I esteeme above all *that* which the world calls advantage : and I hope by my sincere endeavours to serve God and his church, to demonstrate that I designe to employe all your grace's and others of my noble friends favours *onely to enable to doe more good* ; and truly the favourable influence of your grace's kindnesse herein will adde a new vigour to my studies, whiche are now intent upon the last part of the offices in our excellente liturgy, which I perswade myselfe, *would be more admired if it were better understood*. The pleasinge trouble of this study dothe soe wholly challenge me at present, that I hope your grace will

will dispense with my personal attendance at
 London, for a confirmation of this honour you
 have conferred on me, and if possible I must
 beg leave to receive this confirmation when
 your grace shall returne home, since neither
 the charge nor time of a London journey are
 futeable to my present circumstances: In the
 mean time I shall frequently remember your
 grace in my prayers, and learne from Seneca
 to make pleasing reflexions upon this evidence
 of your grace's respect. *At illa quanto grati-
 ora sunt, quantoque in partem interiorum ani-
 mi nunquam exitura descendunt, cum delectant
 cogitantem magis à quo, quam quid acceperis?*
 Senec. de Benefic. l. i. c. 15. Upon your
 grace's returne I shall immediately attend you
 at Bishopthorpe, with more particular ex-
 pressions of my gratitude.

“ I am, my lord,
 Your grace's most dutiful son,
 25th Feb. and most obliged servant,
 1677. THOMAS COMBER.”

He was installed prebend of Holme on the
 5th day of July, and on the 15th preached
 his first sermon in the cathedral of York.

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“*The Companion to the Temple*” had so rapid a sale that a third edition came out about this time, considerably enlarged and improved.

About this time also another edition of his “*Advice to the Roman Catholics*,” made its appearance. A letter was prefixed to this edition, addressed, “To his esteemed friend Mr. W. R.” It was probably written to Mr. Royston, the bookseller: he states therein, that “the speedy sale of the former edition having caused Mr. R. to desire him to review it for another, he had rectified the method of the whole, and strengthened and illustrated every part with as many of the most convincing authorities as he could put in without too much swelling the book.” He says, he “thought these authorities unnecessary, until he found by Mr. R.’s letter, that some Papists denied the instances, and that Protestants desired the confirmation of them.” He makes this laudable declaration, that “it is not command but counsel that he gives, for men should be *reasoned into a right faith*, not *forced into it* :” he might also have ventured to add, they may be *forced* into the *profession* of a religion, but can be *reasoned* only into the *belief* of it.

About

About this time he published his *first book* of CHAP.
IV.
 “*The Right of Tithes, &c.*” against T. Elwood, a quaker, but did not prefix his name to it. It is not surprizing he should decline adding his name, since he foresaw the character of *minister* would have given many of his readers unfavourable prejudices against his performance. That this idea of his was just, appears from the following passage in the preface to T. Elwood’s reply. “If thou art a *tithe receiver* of any kind, there is great danger least interest misleading thy understanding, should hinder thee from discerning the truth.” In the pamphlet above-mentioned our author had made use of some expressions which led his adversary to conclude he was a clergyman, and therefore he addressed him as above, to create unfair prejudices against him.

It may however be fairly asked, why we should entertain prejudices against a book written in defence of tithes, because written by a *receiver of them*? It is certain that candid and impartial persons will not entertain a prejudice on this account; they will not consider the *authority* of him who produces any thing for the public eye, but will give or withhold their assent

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to his *reasoning* alone. Such persons will attend to every man's defence of his right, or what he conceives to be so, and will even consider he is more likely to have good opportunities of knowing the merits of the cause, than an indifferent person. The great misfortune is, that there are many people in the world who do not possess this liberal way of thinking. The objection here made will however apply with equal force against him *who desires to pay no tithes*, as against him *who desires to receive them*; and he that attempts to create unfair prejudices in his reader's mind, doth not give us a favourable opinion of his own candour.

The occasion of the above tract being published, was as follows: About the year 1675, an anonymous book was published, entitled "*A friendly Controversy, between a Minister and a Parishioner of his, inclining to Quakerism.*" Tithes being the subject of the latter part of this publication, Elwood wrote an answer to it, under the title "*Truth prevailing, &c.*"—And in the last chapter, particularly considered the disputed point of tithes. Our author wrote and published the answer above-mentioned, with the title "*The Right of Tithes asserted and proved;*"

proved;" building his edifice on these four principal foundations, *divine institution, primitive practice, voluntary donation, and positive law.* He reasoned very closely from these principles, and fully made good the title of his piece, but the prejudice of his antagonist was stronger than his arguments as will hereafter appear.

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IV.

In this year he published "*A brief Discourse on the Offices of Baptism, Catechism, and Confirmation:*" he dedicated it to his excellent friend Dr. John Tillotson*, dean of Canterbury, with whom we have seen he became first acquainted at London, in the year 1663, during his residence with Mr. Holland as his assistant.

. He begins his dedication of this work by observing, "he did not imagine he should discharge those obligations which the dean's goodness had laid upon him, by presenting these little tracts to him, but rather increase them: for it will contribute," says he "to their reputation, to be usher'd into the world with so worthy a name, and add to their author's character, to be reckoned among the number of your friends. So that if this tender be accepted, but as the testimony of my grati-

* Vide Dr. Birch's Life of Abp. Tillotson, 8vo. p. 49.

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tude, I shall confess myself to be your debtor still. I hope they are so done," adds he, "that they may be honoured by your approbation, as well as your name; for then they will effectually be recommended to all the judicious, and raised above the censures of the less deserving."

From the terms in which the above passage in the dedication is expressed, it is evident he was in considerable estimation with the dean, and the share which he had, when afterwards promoted to the see of Canterbury, in procuring our author the deanry of Durham, evidently shews, he continued to have the highest opinion of his learning, and zeal for the Protestant religion, and did not forget his interest, when an opportunity of advancing it presented itself.

We have already seen how warmly the Earl of Danby and Lord Frescheville had interested themselves for his advancement in the church, and the following passage from a letter of the last-mentioned nobleman demonstrates their good wishes were not at all abated. "If preferment does not come as your friends wish, doe not impute it to their backwardness to serve you, for I can assure you my lord treasurer
is

is as desirous to doe it as ever: he understands how mean a thing that prebend at York is, and it is no prejudice to you for a better preferment to obtain that." Thus, whenever an opportunity presented itself for his advancement, it is evident he did not want friends both able and willing to assist him.

The living of Thornton becoming void by the death of the incumbent, the Rev. Christopher Bradley, M. A. he received a letter from his excellent friend and patron Lord Frescheville, on the 7th of January, to inform him he might have a presentation to that living whenever he pleased to apply for it; and, on the 10th of the same month, Sir H. Cholmeley sent him a letter inclosing a presentation. If, as most good judges have determined, the manner of conferring a favour is that which stamps the greatest value upon it, it is certain, that this bounty of Sir Hugh came recommended greatly by the obliging expressions which accompanied it. The noble friends who had first recommended our author to Sir Hugh's notice, had, amongst other things, informed him, that "in recommending a person of Mr. Comber's merit to his acquaintance and patronage,

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tronage, they conceived, they were conferring a favour upon *himself*, as well as *that gentleman* whom they recommended." Sir Hugh, in this letter, indirectly acknowledges this, in the following handsome compliment : " You may be assured had I not all imaginable satisfaction in the choice of your person, I should more particularly have discours'd about the supplying the cure of so considerable a parish, there being often neglect enough in the case of pluralities : but as I think the help of this addition *much less than what you deserve*, so, I can satisfy myself *you will take all necessary care*. I wish those who come after me may be as circumspect in their choice as I think I have been, who have no other end in view, but the churches service ; and so, praying God to give you as long and as happy an enjoyment of Thornton as any other that hath gone before, I remain, Sir, your humble servant, &c.

H. CHOLMELEY."

As Thornton was only ten computed miles from Stonegrave, he found no difficulty in obtaining a dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury. He received institution the 11th or 12th of January, was inducted on the 17th, by

by Marmaduke Wykes, vicar of Ellerburn, and preached his first sermon the 19th.

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The business of this dispensation seems to have brought him acquainted with the Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom he soon became so acceptable as to be considered a most welcome guest at his grace's table. The archbishop designed him to keep the divinity act at Cambridge, but, on his desiring, through too great modesty, to decline that invidious task, he was created *doctor in divinity* by his grace's patent, on the 28th of June, being only a few months turned of *thirty-three years*, at the time of receiving that honorary degree.

Though many of his friends, from a thorough conviction of his abilities, and the credit he would have acquired, were desirous of his availing himself of this opportunity of distinguishing himself; yet, perhaps, the archbishop's choice of him, did him in reality as much honour as any compliment of a professor from the chair could have conferred upon him, and he had moreover the additional praise of a very uncommon modesty.

CHAP.

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*From the time of his taking the degree of D. D.
to the birth of his first daughter.*

CHAP.
V.
1678.

HE received a congratulatory letter from Lord Frescheville on this occasion, in which his lordship seizes the opportunity to express his pleasure at the favourable opinion entertained of him at Lambeth-Palace : and the same noble lord wrote another letter to him, soon afterwards, in which he speaks as follows on this subject : “ If you intend to make a journey to London, you will find the archbishop more your friend than any body else that is qualified to do you good ; for when I moved him on Friday last *to remember you*, his grace replied, *I think more of him than you are aware of.*”

There is hardly a more triumphant reflexion to the lovers of learning, piety, and merit, than that those persons who have distinguished themselves by their virtue and abilities, sometimes meet with the reward they deserve even in this present life. Amongst the number of those

those men of merit, who have been the fa- CHAP.
vourites of fortune, our author may, doubtless, ^{V.}
very justly be ranked.

On the 22d of January, Mr. Lane addressed a letter to him, which, among other things, contained an account of his (our author) acquiring a new friend, by the merit of his publications on the *Common-Prayer*, in the person of Sir John Bennet, knight of the Bath, elder brother of Lord Arlington, lord chamberlain. This event is so highly honourable to him, and Sir John, who was afterwards created Lord Ossulston, became soon so partial to him, that it may not be unentertaining to relate it in Mr. Lane's own words.—“ The true occasion of this is to relate to you an account of a real compliment from Sir John Bennet, elder brother to my lord chamberlain, in the honour of converse with whom, looking on some books of his, he broke out into a just, though very great admiration of a book written by one *Mr. Comber*, and after I had, from excess of satisfaction, *and out of self-love*, though with some rudeness, both to him and my friend, interrupted him, like an *obstructed eager flood*,
your

CHAP. your praises broke forth from him more and
V. more. I told my lord chamberlain, says he,
that though he might count me foolish to commend a book to one wiser than myself, and though he were my younger brother, yet 'twere fit *he*, as well as *I*, should think of heaven, and surely this book will help us thither. When he asked me if I knew *Mr. Comber*. As well as I do you; but if you read him, you, as well as I, would love a man, that, with so much learning, wit, and piety, hath defended and oblig'd the church and kingdom. After I had shewed him your last letter, though to the discovery of my own faults; the King, saith he, should be told of such a man; and upon my improving the opportunity by acquainting him with your great friends, yet slow preferment, and the contents of your other letter which I remember well: my lord president and my Lord Frescheville may be proud to serve such worth; had I a living of 500l. per annum, none but *Mr. Comber* should have it. Upon my asking leave to let you know your obliger; tell him, says he, I love him heartily, and shall serve him

him willingly; I will get him a turn before
the King, &c. This paper would not hold
the half of what remains. This might have
passed for verball compliment, but the next
day followed what was reall. Before I speak
of any thing else, says he, while I am in good
humour, take a token from me for Mr. Com-
ber, and gave me five guineas, and hardly suf-
ferred me to expresse my sense of his favour to
my friend, &c. &c.”

As the best comment which can be made on
the above transaction, the reader is presented
with the following letter of thanks, from a
copy in our author's own hand-writing.

“ Sir,

“ I have, with some surprize, received my
good friend Mr. Lane's account of those great
and reall testimonies of your respect to me in
your noble present of five guineas, with all
those kind expressions of your favour and good
intentions towards a person who hath not the
honour to be known to you; and the fewer
examples of such generosity this age affords,
the more obligations I have to return my
thank-

CHAP. V. thankful acknowledgements for the same. I
can truly aver I had no other design in those papers, but only to serve true devotion, and to give the excellent offices of our church their just and deserved valew; but it is enough to convince any one who is never so much a stranger to your person, that you have a dear esteem for our holy administration, and a sincere affection to piety, when you are so pleased with what tends to the promoting such designs; and doubtlesse it will be a great encouragement to me to proceed with the last volume, now under my hands, when I find the matter is so acceptable to persons so truly lovers of piety as yourselfe. I know I have done nothing but by the assistance of the divine grace, and therefore I hope whoever receives advantage by my endeavours, *will give God the glory of it.* I have nothing to return for these great and obliging favours, but a present of those books which you are pleased to esteem so well, and the assurance of my prayers for you at the throne of grace, that you may long live to be a patron and encourager of the friends of this excellent church, and finally obtain the crown
of

of righteousness which is layd up for all those CHAP.
that love God ; where he desires and hopes to ^{V.}
meet you, who is, Honoured Sir,

Your's, by all the obligations
of piety and gratitude,
THO. COMBER."

Sir John Bennet was extremely anxious to become personally acquainted with our author, and sent him a very pressing invitation to his house in London. Consulting with his friends on this occasion they strongly advised him to accept it, and particularly Mr. Lane urged him to come to town as speedily as possible : He set off accordingly sometime in the month of May, and on his arrival at Sir John's house was treated by him with every mark of respect and distinction, and received an offer from him to be recommended as one of the King's chaplains. His natural modesty induced him to decline this generous offer, but he was prevailed on to accompany Sir John to court.— Being introduced to the Princess Anne, her highness publicly thanked him in the name of herself and sister, for his book entitled a "*Companion to the Temple* ;" by the perusal of which
I. she

CHAP. V. she had prepared herself for receiving the holy sacrament the preceding Easter. His new patron not content with all these marks of respect, promised him the next presentation to a good living in his gift, as soon as it became vacant.

This is an æra in our author's life equally glorious to himself and honourable to his generous patron, who, from no other principle than his discernment in finding out merit, and his liberality in rewarding it, heaped upon him every mark of favour and respect, which laid within the compass of his power; and by introducing him at court gave him an opportunity of receiving public thanks from the lips of royalty.

He seems to have been in London, during the whole of the month of June, for he addressed a letter to Mrs. Thornton on the 29th of June from thence, in which he tells her, that "the very thoughts of returning into the North, he thinks hath recruited him, for he had been indispos'd almost ever since he came to town, but that he was then *perfectly well*, and so fitter for his journey, which Mr. Lane, who was to accompany him, made him believe his affairs would permit him to begin the
Tuesday

Tuesday following." He says, "he was admitted D. D. by the archbishop's patent and great seal, which he had *that day received*; and," he adds, "it is as *honourable in every point* as at the commencement." He informs Mrs. Thornton, "he had yet got nothing to support his new dignity, but that very fair proposals had been made to him; that he shall leave things in a good situation, which, if Providence sees fit, may make his condition more plentiful in a little time: but he reserved the particulars for their meeting."

Our author has a note that he "preached before the lord-mayor at Guildhall," during his stay in London; but he hath not, according to his usual custom, informed us whence he took his text.

Dr. Comber returned into Yorkshire in July, accompanied by Mr. Lane, and having business which carried him to Durham, his friend went with him thither: he saw it for the first time on the 23d of July, little thinking, in all probability, that he should be fixed there in so eminent a station as that of dean, in little more than ten years from that time.

One T. Waters, who had apostatized to Popery, from the profession of the Protestant religion,

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V.

religion, having sent a long letter dated May 30th, 1678, to his father who lived at Nunnington in our author's neighbourhood, containing such apology for his perversion as the Romish priests suggested to him : to prevent the contagion of this poison from spreading in the world, he wrote a short but sufficient paper in answer to it, to operate as an antidote.

In the beginning of this year, Dr. William Cave, vicar of Islington, addressed a letter to Dr. Comber, the subject of which is *three queries* which our author had put to him, relating to his publication about tithes, which he brought out the next year. Dr. Cave's character as a man of learning is so well known, that any thing upon that head would be entirely superfluous ; the letter in question proves him to have been a very judicious critic. When the acquaintance first commenced no certain marks or traces are delivered down to these times, and though it is plain from the style and expressions contained in this epistle, the friendship betwixt them had been of considerable standing, this is the first letter of the correspondence, which is now extant.

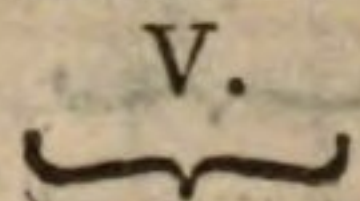
The *fourth part* of our author's book on the *Common-Prayer*, viz. “ *On the Occasional, Offices,*”

Offices,” was published about this time, and was dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He handsomely acknowledges the advantage which had been derived to the former parts from the archbishop’s approbation and countenance, in the following words: “All the parts of this work owe much of that kind entertainment they have generally found in the world to your grace’s recommendation. Requital I know is neither possible nor expected, yet it is my duty to own that debt which I am unable to discharge, and by no means to omit paying the constant tribute of my most hearty prayers for your grace’s preservation and prosperity.”

The *supreme patriarchate*, which he ascribes in this preface to Archbishop Sancroft, reminds us of the revolution of words, with respect to their meaning and the use made of them. The name patriarch was given to all bishops in the earliest ages of the church; then was confined to exarchs; then was given to five of the most eminent sees; and, in the times we are now speaking of, was used in a more lax way, or would never have fallen to the lot of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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On the 19th of November, 1678, Dr. Comber's lady was delivered of a third son, who, on the 26th of the same month, was publicly baptized in the church, and called *Thomas*, his sponsors being Dr. Watkinson, chancellor of the church of York, his friend Mr. Lane, and Mrs. Thornton.

1679.

The great sale of the "*Companion to the Temple*" made it necessary to bring out a fourth edition of the first and second parts of that work; and the demand for his pamphlet, entitled "*Advice to the Roman-Catholics*," was so great as to make it necessary to give a new edition of it also about this time.

In the spring of this year, his only child was seized with such strong convulsions, in consequence of cutting teeth, that the greatest apprehensions were entertained for his life; the child however got the better of them, and he returned solemn thanks for this mercy to Almighty God. It is very natural to suppose, that after having lost two children, and being now likely to lose a third, and that an only child, his feelings on this occasion must have been extremely acute: those parents, who like him have had their children taken from them

them one after the other, can judge of his sensations, and they only are able to appreciate them properly. CHAP.
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On the 11th of April in this year, on a new election of convocation men, he was unanimously chosen with Mr. Burton (vicar of Sutton on the Forest) for the archdeaconry of Cleaveland, and from this time it seems he always had a place in the convocation.

The last year he had collected a large body of facts, and the evidence of persons of the first credit, to prove the disposition of the Papists in his neighbourhood to rise, if any occasion should present itself that should favour their designs. He was one of those who firmly believed the reality of the Popish plot, which, at this time, made such noise in the kingdom. He thought the impeachment of the lord treasurer, and the plots of the Papists, were one and the same grand design, as particularly appears from the following letter, in his own hand-writing, addressed to Lord Frescheville on the 10th of March, 1679.

“ My Lord,

“ That excellent speech of my lord treasurer I had got a copy of in writing at least a

CHAP. ^{IV.} fortnight before your lordship sent it me so
kindly in print, and had communicated several
transcripts of it to our prejudic'd neighbours,
and truly I was thinking to put it in print
myselfe, to make it more public, and remove,
if possible, that false opinion which my lord's
enemies have begot of him in the minds of
too many, for I do truly *believe him innocent,*
and guilty principally *of being great,* and the
envy of great ones hath set lesser wheels at
work to procure his ruine. I know nothing
that hath more disgusted private gentlemen
hereabouts, than the general beliefe that his
lordship's interest removed those two usefull
country justices, whom therefore I would so
fain have seen restored by his interest alone,
and I feared his lordship's greatnesse and inte-
grity might make him apt to despise lesser
though numerous disgusted persons. I have
not omitted in my humble capacity to do his
lordship all the good offices I can, and I think
have convinced most of those I conversed with,
that it was a *French* and *Popish* design to start
this his accusation; the French hoping there-
by either to remove their single enemy the
lord treasurer, or their body of enemies the
parliament; and the Papists hoping if it tooke,
the

the fury of the House of Commons would be CHAP.
spent upon private revenge, and the prose- ^{V.}
cution of the plot diverted, or if it did not
that, it must make faction betweene the two
houses of parliament, or disgust the King so
highly as to prorogue or dissolve them.—
*What counsel could the infernal pit have in-
vented more unlucky at such a juncture.* This
I hope begins to be so far perceived, that the
next parliament will lay aside all private prose-
cutions, and fall close to his majesty's and the
nation's businesse, viz. to *supply him*, and *secure*
us, who I assure your lordship, whatever be
the opinion of the court, think ourselves *in*
extreme danger both with respect to foreign
and domestic affairs; and we shall freely part
with considerable supplies so we may be se-
cured (as far as good ships and good laws can
do it) against both.

“That any should doubt of the just con-
demnation of those that have suffered, *seems*
somewhat strange, the evidence being clear,
confirmed by papers, and many circumstances;
so that the whole parliament, judges, jury,
and all concerned in the examination believed
it, and so doth my lord treasurer, as appears
by

CHAP. by his speech. And for the only objection,
V. that the parties denied it, no other could be
expected, public and *defeated* villainy being
ever disown'd by them who hatch it, and
would have gloried in it if it had *prospered*.
That very principle which led them to design
this treason, viz. the interest of their party
here, would naturally lead them to deny it;
and the same dispensations and indulgences
which allowed the commission of these crimes,
might to themselves who believed in them,
allow of such denial. If they had been of a
party of men who had not been actually guilty
of such things formerly here and elsewhere,
we might have been doubtful of the accusa-
tion, but their principles and practices give all
the credibility imaginable to the testimonies
against them. I pray God our unwillingness
to believe so probable an indictment may not
enable them to do us further mischief, and I
doubt 'tis one great inducement to the fanatic
rage against the church's friends, that their
charity makes them too-slow of believe in this
matter, and too-remiss in the prosecution.
Alas, my lord, whatever pretence the Romanists
may make to draw us in to shield them from
what

what they deserve, 'tis certaine they account us the worst of Protestants, because our principles are the most solid and we the best able to defend them, and 'tis our ruine they chiefly seek, the fanatics being a divided head-lesse crew, sand without lime, who would soon crumble one another to dust, and can it be prudence in us to disoblige dissenting Protestants only to preserve those whose very zeal engageth them to seek our destruction. I wish the churches friends would consider this, and not under a pretence of fearing rebellion from the sects, divert those laws, and that justice which would appease that party, and make the more dangerous party, and more likely to do great mischief, incapable of executing their intentions. 'Tis to be feared, that if we seem, or be on good grounds *suspected* of favouring the accused persons, we may excite a popular tumult against us, which may involve us and them in one common fate; which God avert!

“I must humbly crave your lordship's pardon for this freedom, which my zeal for your lordship's and the church's safety, puts me upon; if I be mistaken my distance must excuse

CHAP. cuse me, and want of right information, but
 V. I think it cannot be, that his majesty, at this
 time, or the nation, and especially the Church
 of England, are in such danger *from the sects,*
as from the Romanists, by modern penalties on
 whom he will oblige all his people, and se-
 cure the church; and surely none can think
 it fit to strengthen one sort of enemies hands,
 and enrage the other, by one and the same
 compliance or indulgence, which whosoever
 adviseth his majesty to now can scarce be
 sincerely his friends. The most affectionate
 respects of all here are tendered to your lord-
 ship, with the assurance of all our prayers for
 your lordship's safety and direction.

“ I am, my lord,
 March 10th, Your lordship's, &c.
 167⁸/₉. T. C.”

T. Elwood having in the preceding year
 published his “*Reply to the Right of Tithes*
asserted,” on the 31st of October, in this year,
 Dr. Comber finished his rejoinder, entitled
 “*The Right of Tithes reasserted and proved.*”

Those who are in the habit of entertaining
 a mean opinion of the learning of the Quakers,
 may

may perhaps be surprized he should think it CHAP.
for his credit to enter the lists with such an ^{V.} adversary. It should therefore be understood
that T. Elwood, or the person who wrote in
his name, had a much greater share of learn-
ing than usually falls to the lot of those who
are defenders of his principles. In the work
to which this last-mentioned publication of
our author was an answer, Elwood undertook
to remove all the supports of his adversary's
edifice, so that his credit was at stake to confirm
and prove the truth of those *supports*. What
they were hath already been particularly men-
tioned.

Many judicious persons thought that a Jesuit,
in the garb of a Quaker, had borrowed the
name of Elwood to propagate his principles:
however this may be, if chicanery and equi-
vocation are the characteristics of a Jesuit, this
writer had an undoubted right to be admitted
to the first honours of the society.

Previous to the above tract being put to the
press, our author had sent it to a learned friend
to peruse, and correct, Dr. John Lake, after-
wards Bishop of Chichester; the doctor ap-
pears, from a letter of his extant on this subject,
to

CHAP. to have made some remarks upon different
V. parts of it. There is no memorandum amongst
Dr. Comber's papers, of the first commencement of this acquaintance, and the above is the first letter of this correspondence which is extant at this day.

By a letter from his learned friend Dr. Cave in this year, it appears the doctor proposed paying him a visit in the summer, and it is very probable he availed himself of that opportunity of taking the advice of his friend on the above publication, in propria personâ.

The Lady Viscountess Lumley, daughter and coheirefs of D'Anvers, Earl of Danby, had left about 140l. per ann. to pious uses; part of this charity was appropriated to the maintenance of twelve hospitals, part was dedicated to the endowment of a free-school at Thornton; amongst the trustees for this latter charity, the incumbent of Thornton, *pro tempore*, was always one. These rents, it seems, had been received, but not so well paid by one of the trustees, the Rev. Nicholas Grey, incumbent of Sinnington, and upon his failing in his suretyship, Dr. Comber thought himself obliged to receive them for the future.—

He

He refused however, to accept a salary of *twenty nobles per annum*, which former receivers had always taken for their trouble, and even paid some arrears of the last receiver from his own pocket, rather than suffer this excellent charity to sustain a loss. This noble conduct needs no comment, it speaks its own eulogium, and must meet the hearty approbation of all good men.

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Having educated Mr. Robert Thornton, with great care, first, under the Rev. John Denton, rector of Oswaldkirk, and then under the Rev. John Burton, rector of Sutton on the Forest, he accompanied him to Cambridge, and admitted him of Sydney-College, on the 24th of April, 1680, placing him under the tuition of the Rev. James Johnson, fellow of that society. Whether he was influenced in his choice of a college by the consideration of its having been the one in which himself was educated, we cannot determine : it is probable however this might have had its weight with him, since, association of ideas, which is the foundation of almost all our knowledge, endears to us not only *our native place*, but indeed *any place* where we have lived a considerable time, and particularly

1680.

CHAP. particularly in the early periods of life, when
V. } impressions are allowed to be most strong and durable.

From Cambridge he went to London, when he published his “*Right of Tithes re-asserted*,” which he had finished the latter end of the last year : on the 22d of May, he arrived safely in Yorkshire.

In the spring of this year his generous patron Sir John Bennet offered him the living of Arlington, in Middlesex, vacant by the death of Dr. Richard Pritchard, Bishop of Gloucester ; he promised to make it worth 150l. per annum, to get him a lectureship in London worth 100l. per annum more, and in time a prebend ; and in many letters which passed betwixt them on this subject, would hardly admit of an excuse. The unwearied endeavours of this worthy man to bring a clergyman of such extraordinary talents as Dr. Comber into a more public situation, shews him to have had an hearty zeal for the interests of the church, and to have been of a character quite the reverse of his brother Lord Arlington, who was generally thought to be a Papist in his heart. The modesty of our author, in thus preferring the

the quietness of privacy to the glare and shew CHAP.
of a more bustling life in town, as it is uncom- V.
mon, does him the greater honour.

On the 8th of March, his lady presented him with a daughter, who on the 15th of the same month was baptized by the Rev. W. Walker at Stonegrave, and named *Alice*; his neighbour Mr. Worsley being godfather, Mrs. Porington and Mrs. Thornton, godmothers.

K

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From the birth of his first daughter to the end of the year 1681.

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1680. HE now applies himself to combat an adversary on the subject of tithes, far more considerable than T. Elwood; this is Mr. John Selden, so justly famous for his learning and abilities.

On the 11th of December, in the preceding year, he had finished, though he did not then publish it, the first part of his "*Historical Vindication of the divine Right of Tithes*," in confutation of Mr. Selden's "*History of Tithes*." This book was published first in the year 1618, in the reign of James I. and had *then* given so much offence both to the clergy, and also to the King, that its author was threatened with great trouble; to avoid which he made a submission, and publicly signed a retraction of his opinions, which does no great honour either to his courage or sincerity. The transaction is so curious as to deserve being mentioned.

Mr. John Selden being summoned before George, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lancelot, Bishop

Bishop of Winchester, the Bishops of London CHAP. VI.
and Rochester*, and three knights doctors of
civil law, sitting judicially on this occasion;
he appeared personally to the summons, and
then made his submission as follows, which he
afterwards signed with his own hand.

“ My good lords, I most humbly acknow-
ledge my error which I have committed, in
publishing the *History of Tithes*, and especially
in that I have at all, by shewing any interpre-
tation of scripture, by meddling with *councils*,
fathers, and *canons*, or by what else soever oc-
curs therein, offered any occasion of argument
against any right of maintenance, *jure divino*,
of ministers of the gospel: beseeching your
lordships to receive this ingenuous acknow-
ledgement, together with the unfeigned pro-
testation of my grief, for that through it I have
incurred both his majesty's and your lordships
displeasure, entertained against me in behalf of
the Church of England.”

From the notes of our author on this trans-
action, he seems to have thought this recan-
tation was sincere; however there is ground

* Dr. George Abbot, Dr. Lancelot Andrews, Dr. John
King, and Dr. John Backeridge.

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enough to doubt of these sudden conversions, and especially if we consider the fear of punishment hanging over his head, might be considered as having considerable influence upon him. One thing however seems very evident, that the liberty of the press had not in those days been carried to the licentious height at which it has lately arrived.

Dr. Comber's work contains a learned and laborious investigation into the earliest account of tithes, a view of what different authors have said on that subject, an account of the progress they made at different periods of time, and what was the state of them in England at the time he wrote this history.

The subject of tithes about this time becoming a public topic, the enemies of the reformed religion, and more especially the Papists, who were always *secretly* encouraged and abetted by Charles II. and more openly by his brother the Duke of York, afterwards James II. took that opportunity of inflaming the minds of men against the Protestant ministers, by representing tithes to be an intolerable tyranny and imposition, that they were not authorized by the command of God, but solely built on grants

grants obtained from different princes, and frequently on the most unjustifiable grounds.—
 If they could once effect the point of persuading men that tithes were not founded on divine right, but were merely built on human laws, they doubted not it would be an easy matter to prove that these human laws were by length of time, and other concurring causes, become so corrupted that they ought to be abrogated and done away. If tithes were utterly abolished, and the support of the clergy left to voluntary contributions, as these reformers contended ought to have been the case, the credit of ministers when left to so precarious a subsistence must necessarily diminish, and consequently the religion itself must soon fall into contempt.

Thus this attack on the maintenance of the clergy as by law established, was an insidious though indirect attack on the religion itself; so that it was happy some of the zealous members of it should take the alarm in time, from a just apprehension of the consequences likely to ensue.

A letter which is extant from Dr. Lake on the subject of this publication, has the follow-

CHAP. VI. ing passage : “ In the main you have made
your point good, and very much obliged the
commonwealth both of religion and learning :
certainly you have said all that the case admits,
and whom this doth not satisfy, nothing will.”

1681. The church of Thornton had been suffered
by his predecessor to run into great decay, and
so had likewise the parsonage house.

There is a note or memorandum in his
pocket book, that on the 2d day of April, in
this year, he completed the repairs of the roof,
floor, and windows of Thornton church, and
he also placed a new set of rails round the com-
munion table. His generous conduct in laying
out of his own pocket considerable sums of
money in repairing and beautifying Thornton
church, cannot be too-greatly commended : he
certainly was not obliged to do it, and if he had
omitted doing it, no one would have imputed
it to him as a fault.

At this time he was surrounded with patrons,
as we have just seen, who vied with each other
in exertions to serve him and promote his in-
terest ; he could not therefore be expected, in
the natural course of things to retain, for any
considerable time, so small a piece of prefer-
ment

ment as Thornton was in his time, and indeed before this he had the option of exchanging it for more advantageous preferment. Instead of suing for dilapidations, as many incumbents would have done, and putting the last rector's executors to heavy charges and expences, or of taking advantage of the bad state of the church's repairs as an excuse for leaving it in the same condition, he generously stepped forward of his own accord to put it into complete order.

It pleased Providence to take to itself his only son, on the 26th of April, in this year : he describes him "as a child of great hopes," and informs us he was buried under the communion table at Stonegrave church, his friend Mr. Man preaching his funeral sermon.

It appears the taste of this age was very great for funeral sermons, which, if conducted with moderation and propriety, may undoubtedly prove useful on many accounts. The solemn interment of a Christian may afford an happy occasion of enforcing many useful duties with peculiar effect ; and especially if the life of the deceased was exemplary and good.

Our author shews with great judgment, in many noble strokes which occur in his com-

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mentary on the funeral service, that amongst other advantages of this practice, the preacher hath the happy opportunity of moderating the grief of surviving relations, by the consolations held forth by our holy religion. In all probability it was considerations of this latter kind which induced him to appoint a preacher on this occasion, since the tender years of his child could not have rendered his life exemplary. The best institution in the world may be perverted, or prostituted to evil purposes, as hath happened to the one we are now speaking of. When a custom is once established every one thinks he must do as his neighbour does, and oftentimes without considering whether the circumstances of the case render it proper to be done, or the contrary. Thus it hath frequently happened, that the relations of persons who have died only nominal Christians, if indeed they in some cases have not been positively bad, are desirous of having the same honour paid to their memory as the rest of their neighbours have usually paid to their departed friends. Preachers are too often accustomed to indulge the wish of panegyric in those relations that desire it, since they commonly

monly reward them in proportion as they are pleased. By this means such abuses have crept into a practice intrinsically good, that it is no wonder the present enlightened age should so generally discountenance it. CHAP.
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Our author composed a very pathetic elegy on the death of this son, which if it be considered he was not a profest poet, may justly be esteemed a proof of his genius and taste, as well as of the warmth of his parental feelings.

On the 6th of July, the Archbishop of York generously offered to collate him to a better prebend than the one he held, namely, that of Fenton, at this time vacant: knowing however the great indifference which he had about preferment, “*he gives him time to deliberate on this offer.*”

It is commonly said, that “he who deliberates is lost;” but however it might be the fashion in the times we are now speaking of, to suffer a good piece of preferment to be lost on this account, it doth not seem to be the custom of the present day so to do. There are some who imagine, that if any one of this description should arise in the present times, he would be accounted a *rara avis* indeed, and
would

CHAP. VI. would moreover be studiously avoided by his brethren, least he should infect them with the malady of *rejecting proffered preferment*.

In the beginning of this year Mr. Johnson, of Sydney-College, Mr. Thornton's tutor, addressed a letter to Dr. Comber, in which he speaks handsomely of that gentleman's abilities, and amongst other things informs his correspondent, that Mr. Thornton was about to sit for a scholarship, and that he thought him as well qualified in point of abilities as any of the candidates, but he fears he had spoiled all by inadvertently declaring, that if he gained it he would give it to his sizer Matthew Smith; the fellows of the society having taken umbrage at that declaration.

His friend Mr. Lane addressed a letter to him in the month of May, condoling with him, and comforting him under the loss of his son. He calls him "brother, and much loved, and pitied friend;" and remarks, that "if joys when united are thereby increased, and griefs when divided are more easily borne, he hopes it was some accession of joy to him to impart his blessings to him in his last letter but one, and that his sorrows for the loss of his child

contained

contained in his last letter, were somewhat abated by being poured into his friendly bosom." In warm and energetic language, he then proceeds to express the joy which he felt for his good fortune, and the sympathizing grief which touched his breast, at the recital of his sorrows. It is difficult, if not impossible, to convey in adequate language, the warmth of true and disinterested friendship, which appears to have glowed in this gentleman's breast. Those who in travelling through life's thorny path, have had a sincere friend, may fully apprehend it, and they alone are capable of doing it. This letter concludes in these terms: "My dear brother, I am torn from thee by business; once I thought of letting this lie by till next post, but I fear how health or business may interpose; 'tis a strange violence that now compels me so soon to subscribe myself,

Thy truly pitying, and *love-resenting*
friend and brother,

JOS. LANE."

On the 26th of June, in this year, Dr. Dennis Grenville, sometime after this Dean of Durham, whom Dr. Comber succeeded on his depri-

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CHAP. deprivation of that dignity, as will hereafter
VI. be seen, addrested his first letter to him, in
which he desires to be personally acquainted
with him. This is an exact copy of it :

“ Worthy and Rev. Sir,

“ The fame of your worth and goodnesse
hath drawne mee into these parts, havinge a
greate ambition to bee personally acquainted
with you, who have been soe kind a friend to
the *incomparable liturgy of the Church of Eng-
land*. I did hope to have had the happinesse
of being your auditour this day at Stonegrave,
and to have joyn'd with you in the publick
worship and devotions of the day ; but your
care of your other church hath deprived mee
of that satisfaction ; and unlesse your health
and occasions will permit you to bee at Newton
to-morrow morning by ten of the clock (where
I shall not faile to waite on you) I shall misse
of the cheife part of the pleasure which I pro-
pose to myselfe in this journey, being under
some obligation to be at Yorke to-morrow
night. I will give you no further trouble than
to assure you, *I am an hearty lover of you,*
(*though unknowne to you,*) and such an one
as.

as will always bee ready to expresse him-
 selfe, (Rev. Sir,) CHAP.
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Your most faithful servant,
 Helmsley, and affectionate brother,
 June 26, 1681. DENNIS GRENVILLE."

The above letter is so exceedingly honourable a testimony of the general esteem in which our author was held, on account of his pious labours, by those that were unacquainted with his person and the intimacy with Dr. Grenville was afterwards so great, that the entire letter as above hath been given without variation. The reader will be pleased to carry always in his remembrance the remarkable circumstance attending the commencement of this acquaintance, and how strenuously it was desired on the part of Dr. Grenville, as it will hereafter shew some parts of the doctor's conduct in a singular light.

The acquaintance commenced according to the desire expressed in the above letter, and a very great intimacy soon sprung up betwixt the parties. About this time Dr. Comber was very anxious to exchange his prebend of York for one in the cathedral of Durham, and
 several

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several of his friends exerted themselves greatly to assist and further his wishes. Within a fortnight from the date of the first letter, viz. on the 7th of July following, Dr. Grenville sent to Dr. Comber the following copy of a letter to his brother the Earl of Bath.

“ Dear Brother,

“ Wee are likely to have a prebend or two very speedily vacant in our church of Durham, and I have some reason to imagine that your concurrence in procuring it for Dr. Comber, a person of great eminence and worth, will bee required by my Lord Frescheville, and some considerable friends of the Earl of Danby, who is soe great a patron of the doctor's, that had hee not fallen under a cloud, hee had long since fixed him in as considerable a station in the church as his meritt deserves. I doe presume to joyn with these noble persons in their request, declaring freely, but in good conscience, that Dr. Comber is the man of all England that I could wish might bee the first prebend of Durham; being not onely calculated by his way of study for the meridian of our dioceffe, but the most fit man to bee a support

port and comfort to mee in the execution of my office, which sometimes becomes a little burthenfome to mee for want of some zealous, steady, and thorough paced churchmen. Such a man as him I am fure wee have not in our country, and I think very difficult to bee found in all England. This opinion that I have of him is not fingular, hee having gained a multitude of *lovers** and *disciples* among the most confiderable persons in the nation, by his admirable difcourfes upon our liturgy, wherein he has, without doubt, fucceeded the beft of any other. To proclaime the high *love*† and esteeme (nay even the veneration which I have for him) how far it may bee serviceable to him, I am not well affured, but this I am certain of, that no man can have a more juftifiable zeale for the preferment of any man than I have for his : and whether or noe I fucceed in appearing for him, better than I have done in any endeavours for others, yet I fhall have much fatisfaction in having delivered my foul, by contributing the beft I can to fo good a work. My great friendship for Dr. Comber I am apt to think *an act of virtue*, becaufe I had it for

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* i. e. Friends.

† Regard.

him

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him *before ever I saw him*; the reading of his books, which were my constant companions whilst I was in France, created in mee an extraordinary love and respect for the author, and a very earnest desire to bee acquainted with him, which I could never accomplish till this journey towards Alcester, where my wife hath remained since my coming into England. I rid a day or two's journey out of my way, to give him a visit, who did very kindly receive mee, though I was a perfect stranger unto him, and had no body to introduce mee, and I am now convinced that his worth is above all the fame that I have heard of him: noe one can give you more particular assurance thereof than my Lord Frescheville, and the Earl of Danby. The Archbishop of Canterbury hath also a very great regard for him; indeed so much, that there is no doubt but that hee might bee preferred in a short time some where or other in England, but the thing that hee, and all his friends for him desires, is, that hee might have a prebend in Durham, hee having married into a very worthy family in those parts, and being possessed of a living near the bishoprick, which makes a preferment in our church, of all others

others the most fit for him : but preferments in our church are soe much sought after, that without some extraordinary and very prevalent intercession, they cannot be procured for any person. I am apt to believe that the bishop* has so much kindnesse for him, that hee woulde not bee displeased to have some powerfull solicitors in his behalfe, that hee might bestow it upon him without disobliging lesser pretenders. I repeate my humble and earnest desires, that if any of his friends request your countenance and assistance, you would bee pleased to give them. I do assure myselfe you will have much comfort from soe good a piece of service to the church, hee being an extraordinary champion for our liturgy, which is the chiefe ground of my hearty zeale for him. I cannot deny but the fixing so usefull a person (*a man after mine own heart*) in the bishoprick of Durham, would bee a high gratification to mee : the great help and ease that I should have from such a friende in doing my duty, would capacitate mee much better to attend unto my secular concerns, and to avoide for the future, the scandall which I have by

* Dr. Grenville was here greatly mistaken.

CHAP. chance given to the world by too-much neglect
 VI. of them.

“ Sir, I beseech you to take these things into your consideration ; by your kindnesse to such good men, you will secure for yourselfe and family a good share in such devotions, as shall bee offered up at God’s altar ; the good fruit whereof, our family I trust hath had no small experience ; for God’s great goodnesse (which hath been very remarkable in the worst of times) seems to have been bestowed upon us *for our forefathers love to church and churchmen.* I dare bee very positive of this, for it is within my own sphere. With my hearty prayers to God that wee may all continue to have the same interest in God’s blessed providence and protection in all future trialls and tymes of perill, which seem to threaten us now, I rest,

Dear brother,

Your faithful, humble servant,

and affectionate brother,

DENNIS GRENVILLE.”

The above long letter of Dr. Grenville shews how warmly he entered into the interests of his new friend : in a letter still extant, which
 seems

seems from its contents to have had the above inclosed in it, he informs him, that whatever may be the success of that letter, he assuredly had a very honest design therein, both with reference to Dr. Comber and the church. And he further says, he has also written a similar one to a certain countess, who may sometimes speak a kind word for him.

On the subject of procuring a prebend at Durham, which Dr. Comber appears to have had much at heart, there are extant many letters from almost all his great friends, and amongst the rest there is a copy in his own hand-writing of a letter he addressed to the the Archbishop of Canterbury. It appears from the general tenor of all these letters, that the Bishop of Durham was deeply engaged for several vacancies, which were expected to happen in a short time; and the King, though desirous of obliging the Earl of Danby, had promised before his lordship's application, not to interfere with the preferments in that cathedral: so that his wishes to obtain a situation at Durham, were for the present obliged to be laid aside.

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At the particular request of Sir Richard Graham, of Norton Conyers, bart. this year high sheriff for the county of York, Dr. Comber preached the assize sermon in York cathedral, on the 14th of July, taking his text from Heb. vi. 18. This discourse was delivered before the judges *Dolben* and *Gregory*, and was printed at their request, and that of the high sheriff. The title of it was, “*The Nature, Necessity, and Usefulness of solemn-judicial Swearing; with the Danger and Mischief of vain and false Swearing.*” It had an excellent preface prefixed to it, in which he pointed out the seasonableness of insisting on such a subject, by adverting to the *strange contradictions* in different oaths which had happened about that time, the verdicts contrary to evidence, and the frequent indictments for subornation of witnesses. Indeed the prosecutions for the several plots which so much agitated the public mind at that time, had produced such monsters of perjury, as was shocking to human nature.

He was so sensible he might be subjected to *party violence* on this occasion, that he remarks, “I mean no reflexion on any party or order of men,

men, but 'tis evident there have been many crimes of this kind of late, unless *contradictions* can both be true." He observes, that "the prostitution of oaths, not only in common conversation, but in the light and unsolemn manner in which they had been tendered and taken in courts of justice, contributed greatly to diminish the natural reverence which the human mind ought always to have for such a solemn appeal to Almighty God: a test," he justly observes, "which is the greatest security one subject can give to another, and all of them to their sovereign."

His excellent patron Sir Hugh Cholmeley addressed a letter to him about this time, in which he informed him, that in a late conversation with Dr. Henry Compton, bishop of London, his lordship had expressed himself much his friend, and earnestly desired him to come and reside in the metropolis, and promised to provide for him. His answer to this letter does not appear.

In the month of November, in this year, he published the *second part* of his "*Historical Vindication of the divine Right of Tithes*;" and dedicated it to the Bishop of London.

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He does not expressly say, he had the direct permission of his lordship to dedicate it to him, but doubtless he either had it, or very solid reasons to conclude it would be acceptable. It is certain that the approbation of so learned a prelate, who made such a distinguished figure at the revolution a few years afterwards, must have been a strong recommendation to this, or to any work. He assigns one reason which urged him to undertake this work, which had, and ought to have its due weight. “I have reason,” says he “to believe, that many commit sacrilege by that current and commonly received error, that tithes are not due by *divine right*, but only by human positive law. In the days of our fathers,” adds he, “while the *divine right* was generally maintained and believed, it was thought *a matter of conscience* to pay tithes justly: but now they that are either so great as to despise the punishment of the law, or so cunning as to avoid discovery, without scruple in part or in whole subtract and detain their tithes, and are persuaded by this false principle that it is no sin.”

It is certain that those who allow tithes to be settled on the clergy by the laws of the land,

land, which all must do who have not determined to withstand the evidence of their eyes and ears, yet venture to subtract or detain them, must have weak heads, or bad hearts, or both, to fly in the face of their country's laws : and yet this is frequently done in the present day, as well as in the times when this tract was published. And since those who denied the *divine right* of tithes, should have paid them out of respect to the *human sanction*, but did not, it was certainly a laudable design in our author, convinced as he was himself of the *divine right*, to endeavour to persuade the detainers of them to renounce what he thought so serious and dangerous an error, and which encouraged them, as he says in his dedication, "to do this great injury to the church, and a much greater to their own souls."

Sometime in this year Dr. Comber published a tract, entitled "*Religion and Loyalty, &c.*" which he informs us, "was intended to convince the Duke of York, that *no person in succession to the throne of England ought to embrace Popery* ; and *to persuade the people of England not to alter the succession.*" One copy was sent into Scotland to the Duke, who en-

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quired after the author but he would not be known. In fact he knew the spirit of Popery too-well in general, and might justly suspect that of the Duke of York in particular, to trust to his promises, though made in a much more solemn manner.

With respect to the contents of this publication, he begins with remarking, that addresses are a kind of petitions, and the late ones to King Charles were petitions to *preserve monarchy and the Protestant religion*; and those who disliked them had a right to declare so by counter addresses. He supposes the reasons of these addresses to have been,

I. False reports of his majesty's designs of arbitrary power*.

II. The solemn thanks given by sectarists and the factious to their friends in parliament, for attempting to repeal the establishment.

* Though King Charles II. had at this very time the most arbitrary designs, having a little time after this dismissed his parliament, and never called another to his death, governing from that period *despotically*; yet, assuredly, Dr. Comber believed these reports to be *false*, and gave credit to the King's *repeated assurance*, that "he would govern the kingdom according to law, and would neither use arbitrary government himself nor suffer it in others."

III. The

III. The hopes of republicans.

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IV. The want the King had of encouragement in his gracious designs.

He endeavours to shew the addressers were very considerable for weight and influence if not for number, and no enemies to parliaments, but likely to make the King love them. He proceeds to vindicate the general matter of the addressers as asserting the lineal succession to the throne, and securing the Protestant religion.

As to the former point ; he supposes it *unlawful* to break the succession, and endeavours to prove it so from *reasons* and *matter of fact*. The former, are founded in the patriarchal scheme, the latter in attempts to answer such parts of the “ *History of the Succession* ” as tend to prove the English monarchy *not* an hereditary one. He remarks, with great justice, that “ it is a very jesuitical doctrine, that *what is expedient is lawful* ; ” and he supposes that the *Exclusion-Bill* had not even this character to recommend it, being likely, if it should pass into a law, to expose the nation to *civil war, democracy, or conquest by foreigners* : and he takes notice of the several ways by which
the

CHAP. the next heir to the crown may be a Pro-
VI. testant.

He further observes, that in all likelihood the *Exclusion Bill* would not be effectual. It would probably rouse the Duke of York to opposition and persecution, in which he would be supported by foreign powers. That the Duke of York's children would never support such a bill, though passed into a law, and that his present majesty and the Duke of York would consent to restrictions: finally, we should not distrust Providence while we do well.

With respect to the latter point, *the securing the Protestant religion*, he lays down general rules which confirmed the addressers in adhering to this religion, and then proceeds to enumerate all the several motives which may, and ought to induce the Duke of York to join them in it. As, that he was educated in the Church of England, that he is the grandson of King James I. who imprecated curses on his posterity if they departed from it; the son of Charles I. who died for it, and strenuously exhorted his children to adhere to it.

He observes, that the Protestants of the Church of England adhered both to King
Charles

Charles I. and Charles II. while the Papists
had made many attempts on his present ma-
jesty's life, and he fixes unanswerably the gun-
powder plot in the reign of James I. on the
Church of Rome. He shews that the Papists
had made many attempts on the life Queen
Elizabeth: that Pope Gregory XIII. had
given England and Ireland to his son: Pope
Sixtus V. gave it to the King of Spain: and
Clement VIII. sent too briefs to exclude James
I. He proves the share which the Jesuits had
in the civil wars, and the agreement of the
maxims of the rebels with Doleman's Book.
He manifestly shews, that it is the *interest* of
the Duke of York to adhere to the Church of
England, which was most famous for its
loyalty, while that of Rome was no less re-
markable for its *disloyalty*. He notices, that
the reformation hath made the King of Eng-
land supreme in all causes, while the Papists
impudently maintain that England is a fief
belonging to, and held of, the Bishop of
Rome. Finally, he displays at large, the
rooted antipathy of the English nation to the
religion of Rome, which dislike was greatly
encreased by the cruelties and oppressions
which

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which the Popes and their agents had so frequently exercised ; whose pride, avarice, and cruelty, he fully exposes in the conclusion of his book.

The contents of this publication have been more particularly noticed, because, in a subsequent reign, his adversaries greatly misrepresented the arguments and general matter contained therein. It evidently was his intention, to conciliate the minds of the people to a quiet acquiescence in the succession of the Duke of York to the throne of England, on its becoming vacant by the death of the reigning King Charles II. from an apprehension, perhaps not ill grounded, of a civil war breaking out on the demise of the crown, if the *Exclusion-Bill* should pass into a law. By the strong persuasions made use of in the above tract, he evidently wished to prevail on the Duke of York to embrace the Protestant religion with sincerity, and from the tenor of its contents, we must think, he had not lost all hopes of being able to effect that desirable end. Arguments against Popery from political considerations, were not able to make the Duke of York less a Papist in his heart than

than he was before, but they might influence CHAP.
him to conceal his adherence to the see of VI.
Rome, which, in the view our author then
had of things might be advantageous.

The duke was undoubtedly sincere in his submission to the Roman pontiff, however unaccountable and singular it may appear, for he not only thought it his duty openly to profess that submission, but when he afterwards came to the crown, to reduce his subjects to the same. This impolitic violence was, under Providence, the means of extricating these kingdoms from Papal tyranny and usurpation. If he had pursued a different line of conduct, and given way for the moment to the strong prejudices of the nation against Popery; when the public ferment was a little subsided, he might by slow and imperceptible degrees have rivetted those disgraceful chains on the English nation.

Our author might justly plead in excuse for any passages in this piece which seemed to favour *non-resistance*, that at this time it was the doctrine of English divines almost without exception. It is a fact well known to every one conversant with English history, that Dr. Tillotson

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lotson and Dr. Burnet, afterwards so famous in the revolution effected on opposite principles, earnestly exhorted Lord Ruffel, both privately before his execution, and publicly on the scaffold, to condemn the doctrine of resistance to civil power. That they counselled him to condemn it *not absolutely*, but *with regard to the circumstances of the times*, is the gloss of a celebrated writer on this subject, which is quite unsupported by any thing in history.—When experience afterwards convinced them of the fallacy of this doctrine, and shewed them what mischiefs in some peculiar concurrence of circumstances it was capable of producing, it must be confessed, it was more to the credit of Dr. Tillotson, Dr. Burnet, and Dr. Comber, that they were able to see through the prejudices of education, which many other great and learned men* were never able to do, than that they had been sometime involved therein.

It is very evident from our author's long letter already given on this subject, that he was firmly convinced of the reality of the Po-

* i. e. Archbishop Sancroft and the rest of the *nonjuring party*, amongst whom were his friends Dr. Lake, Bishop of Chichester, and Dr. Kenn, Bishop of Bath and Wells.

pish plot, which some people at this period pretended to disbelieve, and besides the letter alluded to, and the evidence which he collected to prove it, he wrote about this time a very severe satyric copy of verses, in which he represents the citizens of Papal Rome to be like their Pagan ancestors, Sylla and Nero, in cruelty. He observes, they will not suffer Protestants to forget the *Spanish Armada*, or the *Gunpowder Plot*: that their complaints against Queen Elizabeth and James I. were mere pretences: that King Charles II. gave the greatest encouragement to Papists, who crouched and submitted to Oliver Cromwell, but, like fostered snakes, bit their deliverer.

It is well known how warmly Charles II. supported the cause of his brother the Duke of York, and how strenuously he opposed the *Exclusion-Bill*, which once had passed the House of Commons, but was lost in the House of Lords. His majesty had dissolved one parliament abruptly, amongst other things, for persisting in bringing forward the said bill, and at length he determined to govern his kingdom without a parliament, as hath been
noted

CHAP. noted above, which resolution he observed for
VI. several of the last years of his reign.

It appears by several letters addressed to Dr. Comber in this year, and particularly one from Lord Frescheville, that the Duke of York was at this time extremely unpopular, and it was the opinion of his lordship, "that nothing short of his conversion to the Protestant religion would reconcile the people to his highness;" so odious had his adherence to the Roman-Catholic religion rendered him to all ranks of people.

There is extant an original letter to our author from a number of gentlemen, who had jointly set their names to it, requesting his attendance at a meeting shortly to be held in his neighbourhood, for the purpose of returning an *address of thanks* for his majesty's late most gracious declaration of liberty of conscience, and they hope he will readily join them "*in soe good and necessary a worke.*" There is no copy of his answer to this letter, but by his subsequent conduct it will sufficiently appear what was his opinion of their conduct.

CHAP.

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*From the end of the year 1681, to the death of
Archbishop Sterne.*

FROM the transactions of last year it is manifest that Dr. Comber was highly esteemed by the Bishop of London, and as an unequivocal demonstration thereof, his lordship addressed a letter to him on the 26th of April, in this year, in which he earnestly requests him to come up to London with all convenient expedition, having something of importance to communicate. Soon after the receipt of this letter he set out for London, but arriving at Doncaster, found the waters very much out, and very narrowly escaped being drowned.—He was obliged to stay some days at Doncaster, and then instead of proceeding on his journey, returned to York.

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1682.

In so short an interval as a few days, he found his only daughter, who was at a boarding school in York, so extremely indisposed, that little hopes were entertained of her recovery. At length it pleased God to restore this
M child

CHAP. child to his prayers, and by the 26th of May,
VII. her health was so far re-established, that he
was enabled to set out with Mr. Thornton, his
brother-in-law, to Oxford, for the purpose of
entering him a member of that university, he
having sometime before this left Cambridge.
On the last day of May this gentleman was
admitted of University College, Oxford, and
placed under the care of Mr. Hugh Todde,
fellow of that society. Having finished the
business which carried him to Oxford, in the
beginning of June he took leave of that learned
seminary, and proceeded immediately to Lon-
don. On his arrival in the metropolis, the
bishop received him with the greatest kindness,
and generously offered him a living and a lec-
tureship, together worth about 300l. per an-
num, promising also to use his exertions in
procuring him better preferment hereafter, if
he would come and reside in London. The
Archbishop of Canterbury also sensible of Dr.
Comber's worth, and having besides a very
great personal regard for him, urged him to
accept this offer, "as he was very desirous of
having him reside near him;" his grace like-
wise promised to assist in further preferring him.
With

With suitable acknowledgements he declined these generous proposals, though so advantageous in a pecuniary view, and attended with circumstances which reflected so much honour upon himself. He informs us, that “his engagements in the north was the reason of his declining these offers,” and amongst other reasons it is probable he wished to indulge his lady’s taste, who was extremely partial to her native place, and greatly disliked the hurry and bustle of a town life.

The bishop sorry, but not offended at his candid refusal, as his noble patron Lord Frescheville was dead, introduced him at Windsor on the 10th of June, when he had the honour of kissing the hand of the Princess Anne, who was lately returned from Scotland with her father the Duke of York, who by this time was publicly known to be a Papist. Her royal highness, to evidence her firm adherence to the Protestant religion, admitted Dr. Comber and some other distinguished Protestant divines, to be her chaplains; and on the 25th of June, he was called on to preach at Whitehall.

In the beginning of this year the celebrated Dr. Gilbert Burnet, afterwards Bishop of Sa-

CHAP. VII. rum, published his *Regalia*, or “*History of the Rights of Princes, &c.*” and Dr. Comber wrote an answer to it, entitled “*Animadversions on the History of the Rights of Princes, &c.*” by which he afterwards heard the doctor was much discomposed.

The intention of the “*Animadversions, &c.*” was to detect several *errors* and *false quotations* of the doctor, which he had suffered to find a way into the “*History, &c.*” The animadverter, who does not seem to have prefixed his name to his publication, had pointed out these errors in a private letter to the doctor, and requested him to correct them, but on his declining to do this, he published the “*Animadversions, &c.*” above-mentioned.

The doctor wrote an angry reply to this pamphlet, which laid some time unprinted in Chiswell’s shop, where Dr. George Hickes, dean of Worcester, our author’s intimate friend, happening to see it, in a letter dated the 15th of July, 1682, reported it to be “*a most malicious reply ;*” but it must be recollected Dr. H. and Dr. B. were at this time at variance. However it seems that Dr. B. himself thought this reply *too-keen* for the public eye. In page the
third

third of the answer he did publish, he speaks of his first written answer in these terms: “In which there was mixed *such a sharpness of style*, that how much soever I was provoked to it, yet I could not think it any way becoming my profession to publish it with so much acrimony, &c.” Notwithstanding this declaration, *too-much asperity* found its way into the printed answer. The Bishop of St. Asaph, a very particular friend of Dr. Burnet, in a letter addressed to our author on this subject, informs him, that he had advised Dr. B. “to take out all the sharpness of his answer to the *Animadversions*, and to let nothing passe but a fair vindication of himself;” which advice however was not complied with. “It is not,” adds his lordship, “as it should have bin if I had seen it before it went to the presse; I do not like severall things in it, besides those which you have mentioned.”

Thus both Dr. Burnet himself, and his friend the Bishop of St. Asaph, concurred in censuring the undue warmth made use of in the “*Answer, &c.*” and if his resentment had not got the better of his prudence, he would never

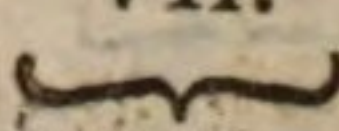
CHAP. have suffered so much asperity as still remained
VII. in it, to pass uncorrected.

There is extant in our author's own handwriting the copies of two letters which he addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject of this controversy, which so fully explains his reasons for the part he took therein, that they may not be unacceptable to the reader: the first, though without date, was probably written in the month of July, and is conceived in the following terms:

“ My Lord,

“ Your grace's particular kindnesse expressed to me, engages me to make a return of my gratitude, and gives me the courage to acquaint you with something which of late hath given me some trouble. The occasion was my reading Dr. B——'s History of the Regale, with no little care, because I found *it reflected severely on the persons and interests of the clergy.* The bare marginal notes which I put down on this occasion, I was persuaded to permit a friend to print, in some measure to stop the mischiefs which might arise from divers passages

passages in that discourse. To this, before I was got home, the doctor put out a lofty and scornfull reply, without *owning his mistakes*, or *excusing his reflexions*, but undertaking to justify all he had said. I confesse I am not *certainly known* for the author, but I dare own it to your grace; and though some have advised me to sit silent, and I myself do not incline to print any thing against Dr. B. yet least he and others, who will take such prejudices from his indecent, false, and reflecting passages, should triumph over this poor church, I have drawn up my thoughts of his answer, and humbly beg your grace to do me the favour, at some leisure minute, to cast your eye over them, that if I cannot publicly vindicate myselfe, yet I may demonstrate to your grace, there was great cause for those *Animadversions*; and that I had both a good cause, and an honest design therein, which was either to bring the doctor to make *some satisfaction to the injured church*, or if not, *to prevent the infection from spreading too-far*. And now I submit all to your grace's censure, and will either commit the manuscript to the flames, or keep it a while beside me, to see if he will give any new provocation. I

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VII.


have more agreeable studies to my temper than this of controversy, yet I neither fear the doctor's arguments nor his reproaches in so good a cause, only I would not be the instrument of drawing a man of *great parts* and *fierce temper* to seek to repaire his credit by justifying his very errors, and by renewed reflexions on the clergy.

“I remain, my Lord,
Your grace's most affectionate
and dutiful son and servant,
T. C.”

The second letter, which is also without date, appears to have been written soon after this; Dr. Hickes's letter containing the archbishop's opinion is dated the 17th of August, and the part alluded to is thus expressed: “I went to Lambeth, where the archbishop, after I had told him my businesse, exprest himself in as much love and respect for the *supposed* author of the Animadversions, as man could do, and in a contrary manner for Dr. B. After he had perused the letters he told me he would have an answer written to the *whole book*, but with great care and diligence, to put him out of all his shifts

shifts and doubles, and promised me to look over it, provided Dr. C.* and Dr. H.† would first examine it deliberately, which I promised him should be done.”

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The following is an exact copy of the second letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on this subject :

“ My Lord,

“ Before I had received your grace’s opinion by Dr. Hickes concerning my replying to Dr. B——’s *whole book*, I had drawn up an answer to his late justification of what he was justly charged with in the *Animadversions*, and I hope made it appear that what he styles his defence as well as his book deserves to be censured ; yet I have done it with as much calmness as was possible, because I would not provoke a man (whose parts and popularity enable him to do great mischief) to turn open enemy to that church, to which he yet would be thought a friend : and, therefore, unless my superiors commands prevail over my one inclinations, I will not print these papers, because I love not to contend with a man whose *pride*

* Dr. Cave.

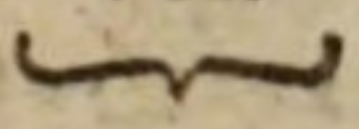
† Hickes.

makes

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makes him resolve not to own the most *evident mistakes*, nor so much as excuse the most *notorious reflexions*. This manuscript may chance to be seen by some of the most judicious, and may represent the case rightly to them, and 'tis their opinion only that ought to be valued.— 'Tis true the whole book is stuffed with mistakes, partiality, and invidious characters of the clergy, their rights and maintenance, their manners and conduct, and I could easily write a volume as big as his in the discovery of those matters; and though he deserve to be so exposed, (especially since he justifies all those,) and some tell me my own vindication exacts it of me, yet we live it such an age that it is likely some ill-effects would follow upon such a discourse, and whether it may have any good effects upon those who need it most is hard to determine. I confesse when I hear Dr. B.'s arguments *already* made use of by the churches enemies, with a kind of triumph over the *poor church*, and those *few rights*, and that *little support* which is left to her, it doth excite me to overlook all difficulties and dangers, and hath made me resolve not to quit so just a cause, which may so easily be maintained.

I hope

I hope I have at last thought of a better way CHAP.
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than to do it in a single book writ on purpose,  for since his two main errors are in the matters of *popular elections*, and *tithes*, and your grace's learned chaplain, and my worthy friend, hath undertaken the one, and will set that matter right, I shall have an opportunity very soon to call all his errors in the other point to an account, in my next edition of the *History of Tithes*, (now almost out of print,) wherein without any personall reflexions on Dr. B. I am resolved to expose all his false representations of the matter of tithes, as they fall in my way, and more fully confute them. Which designe, if your grace do approve of, I hope I may be excused from writing against his whole book of the *Regale*, and perhaps from printing this *short reply*, on which I hope your grace will bestow some few spare minutes. If your grace will let me receive your commands by the good doctor, I will study to do whatever you think most expedient, and for the service of the church, for the prosperity of which my prayers and utmost endeavours shall never be wanting. I wish the Bishop of St. Asaph would improve his interest in Dr. B. to bring him

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him to make some acknowledgements, and give some satisfaction to the church which in conscience he ought to do, and that would supersede all further trouble, and gain him the truest reputation, and the most lasting peace. With my humble request for your grace's benediction, and a place in your prayers,

I remain, my Lord,

Your grace's most affectionate

and dutiful son and servant,

T. C."

The proposal contained in the above letter seems to have met the archbishop's approbation, and it was accordingly put into execution in the following year.

This unlucky controversy occasioned a good deal of altercation betwixt Dr. Comber and Dr. Burnet, until Dr. Tillotson, at this time Dean of Canterbury, who was the common friend of the contending parties, interposed his good offices to accommodate the affair. The pride of Dr. Burnet in refusing to acknowledge his mistakes, which his antagonist conceived to be detrimental to the church, seems to have been the chief cause of this mis-

misunderstanding betwixt these two learned men. CHAP.
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There is one copy of a letter relating to this controversy, addressed to the Bishop of London, and in our author's own hand-writing, which shews the reason of his engaging in it, in so commendable a light, that it ought not to be here omitted. It is dated the 28th August, 1682, which is probably about the time he wrote the above to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and is conceived in the following terms :

“ My Lord,

“ The signall favours and respects received from your lordship at London, obliged me to have made my acknowledgements, before this time, but my apology must be these papers which were finished by me before I know my best friends advised me to answer the *whole book* of Dr. B. and since they are done, it will be both a great honour and vast satisfaction to me, if your lordship can find a spare hour to peruse them, and my hopes to obtain that favour make it needleſſe for me to anticipate your lordship's judgement by giving any account of
the

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the manner of doing them : only, I hope, it will appear they are done *without passion*, and designed rather to *convince* the doctor of his *mistakes*, and the *ill-consequence of them* than to *provoke him*. I have passed by innumerable obnoxious places, and studiously avoided all aggravations, but where the matter required some brief application. If the doctor's bare reading of this in manuscript would win him to find out some expedient to do the *church right*, I could be well pleased, these papers should *go no further* ; if not, I shall be entirely directed by my lord of Canterbury and your lordship, as to the publishing these as they are, or enlarging them into a just account of the persons and things he hath misrepresented. I have written so fully to his grace about this matter, (which letter I know your lordship will see,) that I make bold to refer you thither, and desire to receive your farther orders by Dr. H. I suppose the doctor will tell your lordship how odd a letter I have received from the Bishop of St. Asaph, and what reply I have made to it, I reverence his sacred order, and believe him to be a very good man, and upon both accounts am troubled he should be so

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concerned for one who furnishes the *Atheists*, and *Dissenters* with stones to throw at the clergy, and religion itselfe; and if my papers could bring his lordship to take true measures of this book of the *Regale*, he would rather advise him to recant, than justifie himselfe. I shall give your lordship no further trouble as yet, for I am scarce settled here so fully as to know in what posture my affairs will stand: your lordship's goodnesse to me strongly inclines me to wish myselfe near you, but I fear my circumstances will scarce allow me to be ready to accept that kind offer you made me within the time prescribed. But wherever I am, I can sincerely say, you have one of the chief places in my affections, who am,

Your lordship's
ever obliged, and dutifull servant,
THO. COMBER."

It appears from subsequent letters received from Dr. Hickes on this subject, that his plan of answering the *Regale indirectly* met with the bishop's entire approbation.

Many gentlemen of figure and fashion in the neighbourhood having solicited the honour
of

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of an alliance with Miss Catharine Thornton, several negociations had been set on foot, but insuperable difficulties had arisen in the progress of them: at length this lady was married “advantageously, and with good prospect of happiness,” on the 27th of December, 1682, to the Rev. Thomas Purchas, M. A. sometime of Christ College, Cambridge; whose family resided at Langton, near Richmond, in Yorkshire. Dr. Comber interested himself as warmly for the well-being of his lady’s sister, as he had always done for her brother Mr. Thornton, and as he continued to do to the hour of his death: he informs us himself that, “in this treaty he had a great concern for her good, and met with many difficulties;” it is, however, but justice to declare, that those obstructions arose from the young gentleman’s friends and not from himself.

There is extant one letter from the above gentleman to Dr. Comber on this subject, in which his *disinterested regard* appears in the most honourable light: he says, “he hopes the proposals he has made will convince his correspondent that his love is *cordial*, and not gilded over with outward shew and formal appearance;

pearance ; and if he knew of any more effectual way of evincing his regard he would with all imaginable readiness concede to it." He treats his correspondent, throughout the whole of this epistle, with that respect and reverence which was so justly his due, and seems to consider (as was really the case) that the success of his suit very greatly depended on making him his friend.

This match turned out exceedingly happy for both the parties that were most nearly concerned in it, and of course their respective friends were partakers of their mutual felicity.

On the 27th of March, in this year, Dr. Grenville addressed a letter to Dr. Comber in the warm and almost enthusiastic language of friendship, in which he informs him of the Archbishop of Canterbury's kind expressions concerning him. 1683.

The doctor says, that " though hee had so long used himselfe to a secretary, that hee began to be lazy, and seldom wrote to his best friends, unlesse when some matter of secrecy absolutely required itt, yet hee could not satisfye himselfe to use any other pen than his owne to give an account of his good succeſſe

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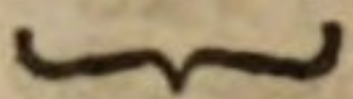
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in presenting his correspondent's letter with his own handes to the Archbishop of Canterbury, that day. My lord," says he, "received itt very gratiouſly, and ſpake to this effect: *I pray Mr. Archdeacon give my ſervice to Dr. Comber, and let him know I am bugely ſatisfied with this, and all his deſignes; and I pray God bleſſe him in all his honeſt undertakings: hee is not at all deceived in any information of my kinde thoughts of him. I have indeed a very good opinion of him, and all his labours, and doe not doubt but hee will doe conſiderable ſervice to the church.*" Dr. Grenville adds, "I profeſſe I never knew my lord ſpeake more heartily than hee did in this reply to mee, and gave mee noe ground of ſuſpition, but that hee is perfectly of your mind in this particular, as to Dr. Burnet; and I am confident you have had a wrong relation, if any body has told you that hee was cooled. For though hee did not come to any very particular point, neither had time, becauſe my Lord Clarendon and ſeverall conſiderable perſons expected him; yet, hee ſeemed very warme, and could not give mee better content than hee did in this general intimation." In the courſe of this letter,
the

the doctor speaking of his waiting upon the Archbishop of York, says, "I could not have any private conference with his grace to fling in any item concerning you, or my owne great affair about the *weekly sacrament*, which above all other matters oppresses my mind." "I am told," adds he, "by Dr. Beveridge that it is intended to have one, when St. Paul's is rebuilt, in that cathedrall; and by the Dean of Canterbury, that they are likely soon to set up one in their church, which will have a great influence on all the cathedralls in the kingdom. Dr. Beveridge his devout practice and order in his church, doth exceedingly edify the city, and his congregation encreases every week: hee hath seldome lesse than fourscore, sometimes six or seven score communicants, and a great many young apprentices, who come there every Lord's day with great devotion. The doctor approves of my honest designs, and hath confirmed mee very much in my resolutions, and will bee I promise myselve a very useful friend to mee.

"When your folio edition on the Common Prayer comes forth," adds the doctor, "I promise myselve the honour of presenting it to the

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King ; it will prove a very good application to my sermon, which begins and ends you know with *my beloved mistresse* the Common-Prayer-Book."

The object of procuring *a weekly sacrament* in all the cathedrals throughout the kingdom, which Dr. Grenville calls *his great affair*, seems indeed to have been very near his heart, for amongst the numerous letters he wrote to Dr. Comber, and which are still extant, he presses this point with great zeal, desiring his correspondent to use his utmost exertions to effectuate this great point.

Dr. Comber appears to have exerted himself greatly to procure preferment for his new relation Mr. Purchas ; a letter from Dr. Hickes is extant on this subject in which he informs him, " he had spoken with the Bishop of London about a living in Yorkshire for Mr. Purchas," but his lordship told him, " and I know it to be true," says he, " that he was so engaged to those whom he had sent abroad in ships, and into the plantations, in promising to use his interest to procure them the King's livings as they became vacant, that he could not promise him the assistance required, which
if

if he had not been thus engaged he would willingly have done." CHAP.
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There is another letter extant on the same subject from Dr. Grenville, who promises to use his utmost endeavours, and exert all his interest as desired, though he fears his influence is not very great: "however," adds he, "your brother Purchas, God bee thanked, is in such good circumstances, both with respect to reputation and plenty, that if hee did live awhile without taking any preferment, it might not bee amiss. Preferment," says he "will come soon enough for so deserving a man as Mr. Purchas, *your nigh relation*, which consideration will of itselſe recommend him to preferment with great ease. But to declare my judgment freely," adds he, "I am persuaded; that to bee your assistant for a year or two in your cure, and you superintend his studies and make him a complete churchman, would bee most eligible, and I see nothing to contradict it but carnall reasoning. I am of opinion, that if hee had not been diverted from his designe of living with mee some time at Easington, (though hee would not have had halfe the advantage as by living with you, in

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VII.

point of learning and speculative divinity,) itt would have been more profitable for him than the taking upon him such a cure as you have in view for him. Not doubting of the reality of what I say, I have invited my nephew, Sir George Wheeler, (who writ the Travels and went into orders last year,) to come and live with mee, and officiate for mee in the same circumstances that Mr. Purchas was to have done. Sure I am itt will bee noe unwise thing in mee to secure him, as I should thereby enjoy the company and assistance of a learned and pious coadjutor, with whom I should bee the better pleased, because hee is an hearty *lover* and *honourer* of my *Master Comber*, and a zealous studier of his *Common-Prayer-Book*."

On the subject of weekly sacraments, the doctor speaks in this letter in the following enthusiastic and energetic language. "But to returne to my old topick of pushing on the *weekly sacrament*, you and I are more particularly concerned in this good worke than any other clergymen that I know of in the whole province, and I am certaine that it is the expectation of severall clergy and devout people in these parts, that wee should doe more than others.

others. You are looked on to bee the greatest champion for the Common-Prayer-Booke in the whole country, (nay perchance in all England;) and I am considered as one of the more exact observers of the rubrick, and sticklers for conformity; and I dare without pride or vanity owne that I am an hearty lover of the booke, and have in mee some innate zeale for order. Really Dr. Comber this is a great and excellent worke, and will doe God more service than all your past labours or my past indeavours since our first coming into the ministry. It will have a wonderfull influence over all the north, and shame the other cathedralls into the like practice: which accompanied with such a circular letter as my Lord of Canterbury intends to send to the bishops of his owne province, would in a powerfull manner preach to all the inferior clergy, not only frequent communion, but exact conformity. Without doubt these means that are of Christ's owne institution, and the incomparable established order of our owne church, (the most incomparable and unexceptionable institution in all Christendome,) are the most

CHAP. probable means to revive religion, devotion,
VII. conformity, and loyalty, in the land."

The design of establishing weekly sacraments which the doctor seems to have desired so earnestly, was soon afterwards carried into execution in the metropolitical church of Canterbury, as appears from a letter of Dr. Tillotson, Dean of Canterbury, still extant: the same laudable practice was also established about the same time in the cathedral of York, as appears from divers letters to and from our author.

Christopher Danby, esq; who was nephew to Mrs. Thornton, had resided with her for several years at East-Newton, being then in very indifferent circumstances. On the 7th day of June, in this year, his nephew Christopher Danby, esq; died in consequence of a fall from his horse, and he as heir at law succeeded to his property which was very considerable. Mr. Danby not being very capable of managing law-suits, or not liking the anxiety and trouble which ever attends them, was persuaded by Dr. Comber to make over his right to his son Abstrupus Danby, esq; at that time studying law in London. This young gentleman

tleman being immediately sent for into York-
shire, made proper settlements on his father,
mother, brother, and sister, and then was so
effectually recommended by our author to the
Lord Chancellor, that he recovered estates at
Swinton, &c. at that day worth 600l. per
annum, and now of some thousands annual
value.

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VII.

“The Most Rev. Father in God, Richard Sterne,” says our author, “my patron and good friend, died at Bishop-thorp the 18th June, 1683, aged eighty-seven years, having been above twenty years Archbishop of York: the dean read the office, and I with others carried him to the grave on the 22d instant. He was,” adds he, “a pious, learned, and grave man; a lover of scholars, prudent, and well skilled in the laws, but hindered of late years, by reason of his great age, from visiting his diocese; otherwise a most excellent bishop.”

The character here given of this excellent prelate is a very honourable testimony of his worth, and as our author was intimately acquainted with his grace, there is every reason to conclude it is a just and faithful representation.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

*From the death of Archbishop Sterne to the end
of the year 1685.*

CHAP.
VIII.
1683.

ON the 29th of June the news arrived at York, that Dr. John Dolben, Bishop of Rochester, was nominated Archbishop of York; and on the 28th of July he was elected in a very full chapter.

On the 18th of August going to preach in his course at York, Dr. Comber was unexpectedly present at the funeral of Dr. Robert Soreby, precentor of that cathedral, little supposing that himself would very speedily be appointed to succeed him.

On the 21st of August he presented Mr. Challoner to the vicarage of Fenton, of which he had the nomination in right of his prebend of Fenton: that gentleman had been recommended by several of his friends, and particularly by a letter from Dr. John Lake, then Bishop of Sodor and Man*, in which Mr. Challoner is mentioned in the warmest manner.—We must suppose that Mr. Purchas was pro-

* He was afterwards removed to the see of Chichester.

vided for in some other way at this time, though our author hath not left any memorandum to that effect amongst his papers, as we have seen how greatly he had interested himself a short time before for that gentleman's preferment. CHAP.
VIII.

Dr. Comber's lady was delivered of female twins on the 24th of August, but both of them died soon after the birth, and the mother recovered with great difficulty.

“On the same day,” continues he, “I received a letter from the new Archbishop of York, whom I had then seen but once, informing me, that without any request from any one on my behalf, he had prevailed upon the King's commissioners to nominate me precentor of York; and because the Archbishop of Canterbury told him he was sure I would not accept it, because I knew he intended to remove me to Canterbury, and because I had writ to him to give the precentorship to another, therefore his grace gave me fourteen days to consider of it, but desired me not to refuse it, for he would be my friend, and desired my stay at York.”

How

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VIII.

How singular a testimony is this strife of love between the two archbishops of the realm, to the merit of Dr. Comber, and what a striking proof does it afford of their zeal for the honour and interest of religion, that each of them should be thus solicitous of retaining a clergyman of distinguished worth in their respective province! Grateful however as he felt for this marked approbation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, his desire to indulge his lady's wish of residing near the place of her nativity, added also probably in some measure to his own inclination, induced him to write his grateful acceptance of it to Archbishop Dolben, accompanied with suitable acknowledgements for his grace's kindness in proposing him, who, as he says, "neither expected it, or even thought of it."

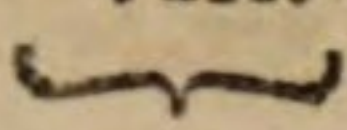
On the 25th of September he accompanied the dean and chapter to Tadcaster to meet the new Archbishop, who received him with very particular respect.

Soon after this he resigned the prebend of Fenton, in which he was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Altham the archbishop's chaplain,
and

and by the King's seal dated the 2d of October was on the 19th of the same month instituted precentor of York, and prebend of Driffield, and on the 23d of the same month was solemnly installed in that dignity. CHAP.
VIII.

On the 30th of October his friend the Dean of Worcester addressed a letter to him, in which amongst other things he speaks of the new archbishop in these terms. "I suppose you have by this time often seen and conversed with your new metropolitan, and observed his temper which is very conversible and popular, and such every way as gives him a mighty advantage of doing much good." In another letter written about this time the dean speaks of the archbishop in very high terms, and says he was extremely well acquainted with him; but whatever good inclinations his grace might have possessed, the opportunity of putting them into execution was soon at an end, for he had only enjoyed this high dignity a very few years when he was cut off by the small-pox, as will be seen in the sequel.

There are extant several letters from the precentor's intimate friend the learned Dr. William Cave, on the subject of the publications

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tions which they each had in hand at this time, and in particular there are two concerning our author's publishing an epitome of his book on the Common-Prayer, which the doctor strongly advised him to do, to enable as many as possible to receive the benefit of his pious labours. The main objection seemed to be the injury the booksellers would sustain in the sale of his folio edition of the same work. The matter seems to have been at length compromised, by his taking off their hands all the copies that were unfold at the time of the publication of this lesser work.

Sometime in this year his bookseller Mr. Robert Clavell addressed a letter to him, wherein he speaks in the following high terms of a young gentleman of the name of Leng, who seems to have been educated at Thornton school, and about this time was removed to the university.—“This, sir, is Mr. John Leng's account before he went to Cambridge; I lent him many books which he makes use of and returns; he delights in nothing more than study, which he is at early and late, *and indeed deserves a better character than any young man I ever knew.*” At the foot of the letter

above

above alluded to Mr. Clavell states Mr. Leng's account of books bought, money lent, &c. &c. Whether Dr. Comber was his guardian, or what was the nature of the connexion between them no certain traces are now extant, but Mr. Leng greatly distinguished himself for his learning at the university, and afterwards became a bishop.

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Two letters are extant from Mr. Leng, one dated the 22d of December, in this year, the other the 5th of January, in the next year; in the first he expresses his obligations to Dr. Comber for his great care and kindness, in general terms; in the second he gives a statement of the money he had expended in his removal to Cambridge.

The precentor removed to York on the 14th of January, 1684, to prepare his house for his family and for his first residence, which he began the 4th of February. From his book of accounts, his provisions of substantial flesh-meats appears to have been prodigious. He did not, however, make this preparation only to entertain the rich and great, but invited the poor and hungry to partake of his feasts; justly considering this to be one of the chief ends of the institution

CHAP.
VIII.
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institution of residentiaryships. Indeed as the warmest advocates for the revenues of the church acknowledge that a considerable portion of them was originally intended to maintain and comfort the poor, every one who hath a proper zeal for religion and a due regard for our Saviour's commands, should with the power possess also the inclination of doing good.

A new edition of his *History of Tithes* was put to the press on the 19th of March against Mr. Selden, the false quotations of Dr. Burnet in his *Regale*, as mentioned above, and a tract about this time published said to be Father Paul's; but, according to the request of Dr. Tillotson, he did not mention Dr. Burnet by name, the doctor being then in disfavour at court and going into France.

He bestowed particular attention on the piece concerning matters beneficiary, which he thinks was not Father Paul's, for reasons which appeared to him convincing. The first was, because the translator brings no proof that it is such: the second, because the author of Father Paul's life, who undertakes to give an account of his works, does not mention it: and lastly, because

Because there are many gross errors in it, totally irreconcilable with the character of his writings, and with his learning. CHAP.
VIII.

In his dedication of this work to the Archbishop of York, he applies a passage of Seneca, which represents him as ungrateful who gave thanks to his benefactor when all witnesses were removed, or who watched an opportunity of doing it when they were out of the way; a conduct which he professes to detest. He reckons the archbishop among the number of those eminent persons who encouraged him to proceed in this work, and owns, that “when he had discovered sacrilege in his former edition of this work he had hoped he should not have been called on again to expose it.” He complains that “even of ourselves men arise speaking perverse things,” and “the trees furnish the axe with an handle.” He declares “he has endeavoured to manage his defence of tithes with such moderation as may demonstrate to the world, he has no quarrel with the persons of his adversaries, but only with their dangerous mistakes.” And he remarks, that “a main design of this work was to refute a calumny,

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CHAP. lunny, that *tithes were got by evil arts, and*
VIII. *employed to evil purposes.*

We have already seen how greatly he was respected by the Bishop of London : in the beginning of this year his lordship having occasion to write to him, amongst other things “ desires him to believe that as he has the Archbishop of Canterbury’s assurance of kindness upon all occasions, he hath his likewise ;” and these favourable sentiments the bishop evinced in several instances afterwards.

In the beginning of April Mr. Lane addressed a letter to him in which he informed him, that the Dean of Carlisle being expected to succeed the bishop of that see lately deceased, great interest was making for him (our author) to succeed the dean, but that it was not a very lucrative thing, and he would be expected to give up one living, he therefore desired to know if it would be worth his acceptance. His answer to this letter is not now extant.

The rectory of Odington, in Gloucestershire, being vacant, and he patron of it in right of his precentorship, he presented “ his dear friend,” as he calls him, “ Dr. Barnabas Long, Archdeacon

Archdeacon of Cleveland, to it, being of the annual value of near 200l." he adds, that "he gave it to the doctor not only on account of his great worth, but also for his care of Mr. Robert Thornton," who having left University-College, was now a member of Magdalen-College, Oxford, where Dr. Long was a fellow.

There are extant two letters from Dr. Long on the subject of his resigning his fellowship, one of the date of the 24th of April, the other of the 27th of the same month, from which it appears he was exceedingly desirous of procuring Mr. Thornton to be elected into it. In the first he declares, he thinks Mr. Thornton "*the best scholar* there will be amongst the candidates," and in his letter three days after this declaration he says, "the election will be free for all persons capable whatsoever:" these two remarks taken together give us a very fair idea of Mr. Thornton's abilities, and of his proficiency in the paths of science.

On the 29th of June, Thomas Smith, D. D. was consecrated Bishop of Carlisle, in the cathedral at York, Nathaniel Crew, Bishop of Durham, and his friend Dr. John Lake, Bishop of Sodor and Man, assisting the Archbishop of

CHAP.
VIII.

York on this occasion. The precentor assisted as master of the ceremonies, and after evening prayers treated the archbishop, the three bishops, and their friends.

The Lord Mayor of York having never come to the cathedral since the dean set up a paper claiming the seat he used to sit in, as belonging to an archdeacon, the precentor ever desirous of accommodating any misunderstanding betwixt adverse parties, and especially so if the cause of religion was likely to suffer thereby, laid a fair statement of the dispute before the too-well known Lord Chief Justice Jefferies, who, upon his representation of the affair, ordered the Lord Mayor to sit on the south-side of the cathedral where no paper was put up. Thus he had the satisfaction, as he himself notes, of being the instrument of quietly composing the difference betwixt the church and the city.

As his prudence in composing this difference is deserving of the greatest praise, so one cannot help wishing that Jefferies had never been employed in deciding more bloody points than this, where a proper regard to justice seems to have had its due influence on his mind. The inconsistency

consistency which is apparent in the conduct of men is sometimes very remarkable ; and in the present instance, this very dean who refused to give up a single inch of ground in God's material church to a Lord Mayor of York, in a little time afterwards did not hesitate to give up to King James II. all the rights, privileges, and liberties, of Christ's church militant throughout all England.

Two letters are extant from the learned Dr. Peter Samwaies to the precentor, one dated in June, the other in July, of this year. The subject of both these letters is the interment of excommunicated Papists. In the letter dated in July the doctor says, "the statute of King James is not very exprefs concerning the interment of *excommunicated Papists*, which is our case. I should not scruple to bury their baptized infants with our church-office, but if any above sixteen years of age should accidentally be omitted in the writs of excommunication, yet because they never came to our church, nor perhaps were ever baptized in it, to bury such according to our church-office would be offensive, as I apprehend, both to Papists and Protestants too. I cannot hear

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VIII.

that Papists are otherwise buried here, than they have been in all the northern parts of England, that is, *in the church yard without the church-office*, by a connivance, which if it were retrenched, would I think enrage them, but not win them when they are alive to come to our assemblies."

The latter end of July he was put into the commission of the peace for the liberty of St. Peter in York, and soon after took the necessary oaths to qualify himself for that office.

Mr. Leng wrote a Latin epistle to the precentor from Catherine-Hall, Cambridge, in the month of August; which, if it is considered he had not been a twelvemonth resident in the university, was certainly much to the credit of his improvement in that interval, and a very favourable presage of his future attainments.

The first part of the letter, after apologizing for his long silence, is employed in expressing the gratitude of his mind for the great kindness he had always received at Dr. Comber's hands; and he declares it is not in his opinion right that he should express himself grateful in words only, but that he would shew himself
his

his humble servant in reality, if he had it in his power so to do. The body of the letter consists of private communications not very interesting to the generality of readers at this day. The conclusion contains so neat and handsome a compliment to Dr. Comber concerning his lately published Epitome of his Commentary on the Common-Prayer, that it is here transcribed for the entertainment of the learned reader, and as a specimen of the latinity of the whole epistle.

“Emi, vir dignissime, dissertationes tuas in librum publicarum precum breviores nuperrimè editas, quæ me perfectò abundè docent, juvant, et delectant, utpotè quæ mihi in memoriam revocant te olim de iisdem rebus concionantem, adeo vero legenti satisfacerunt ut si me privata non devinciret obligatio publicâ tamen ratione tibi plurimum deberem.”

On the 14th of September he was chosen with his friend Mr. Burton by the chapter of York, their procurators for the convocation.

About this time, by the encouragement of the archbishop, he began to meet the neighbouring clergy to discourse of questions in divinity: this he justly calls “a profitable usage,”

CHAP. VIII. which he had formerly promoted, but had of late been interrupted by his going to York.

His lady presented him with a son on the 30th day of November in this year, who was baptized by his friend the Rev. Charles Man on the 4th of December following, and named William, his sponfors being Sir Edward Blackett, Dr. George Hickes, and Mrs. Thornton.

Dr. Grenville addressed a letter to him from London the 4th of December in this year, informing him of his (Dr. Grenville's) promotion to the deanry of Durham, which is so honourable a testimony of his kindness in remembering the precentor's interests that it is here given at length.

“ Rev. brother,

“ Upon intelligence of the certainty of Dr. Sudbury's* death, his majesty hath beene pleased to confirm his gracious promise, and hath given mee his hand to kiss, and wished mee joy, and ordered the secretary to draw up a warrant upon such account; but it will not bee declared in councill till to-morrow evening. Sir George Wheeler my nephew, whom the

* The late Dean of Durham.

duke,

duke, by the means of my Lord Peterborough, CHAP.
VIII.
recommended to the bishop, has got the pre-
bendary that is vacant by my promotion. I
discern there is no standing for Cambridge men
against an Oxford man of Lincoln-College,
which gained his point more than his interest,
though that is very considerable, or the inter-
cession of his friends, which are not a few,
hee being a person of meritt and greate piety.
I named you before him, and used but little zeal
for him, knowing that hee was sure enough to
carry a prebend hereafter, and might very well
stay a while longer, having an estate, and being
a very *young priest*, though I should bee un-
just to him if I styled him *a young man**.

“ My Lord of Canterbury, and Lord of Lon-
don, though much your friends, discerning the
nail would goe have thought fitt not much to
appear for you. Upon this and other confi-
derations I have not been able to doe you any
considerable service in this conjuncture, though
I dare affirm there is scarce any friend of yours
who loves you more heartily than, (Sir,)

Your affectionate brother,

and humble servant,

DENNIS GRENVILLE.”

* Probably because his learning was above his years.

CHAP.
VIII.
1685.

A visitation of the dean and chapter being held by the Archbishop of York on the 18th of January, a contest arose about the protestation *pro formâ* made there ; but the precentor moderating between both parties prevailed on the chapter to do such things as the archbishop required, and the archbishop to make his injunctions in conformity to their privileges. The character of a peacemaker, which hath so eminent a blessing annexed to it in the gospel is that in which he most frequently appeared, and in which he shone with the most distinguished lustre.

Passing through York in his way to London he was awakened in the morning of the 10th of February with the news of the death of King Charles II. by an *apoplectic fit*. “The same day,” says he, “the high sheriff, Archbishop of York, lord mayor, governor and prebends met to proclaim King James II. *whose promise* TO MAINTAIN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, the archbishop published with tears, and I stopped my journey being very ill with grief at so *sudden* and sad a blow to our church and nation.”

It is very remarkable that the best and wisest of the clergy, even those who had opposed

posed the passing of the *Exclusion-Bill* from an apprehension of its tendency to involve the kingdom in the horrors of a civil war, should shew so early and just a distrust of James's *promises*. The foreboding of the good archbishop on this occasion seemed to be prophetic, as the event fully demonstrated.

After his recovery from this illness he proceeded to London, and from thence to Oxford, where his friend Dr. Long in the last stage of an illness resigned his fellowship, and Mr. Thornton, after a fair examination, was admitted to it. The doctor survived the resignation of his fellowship but a very short time.

The Archbishop of York offered the precentor the archdeaconry of Cleveland, now void by Dr. Long's death ; but he, excusing himself, recommended his old friend Dr. Burton, rector of Sutton, who had been Mr. Thornton's preceptor previous to his going to college. His grace paid so much attention to this recommendation that he gave the archdeaconry to the doctor. This is another striking instance of his great indifference to preferment.

At his request the Archbishop of York issued his commands to have the holy sacrament administered

CHAP. administered every Lord's day in the cathe-
VIII. dral at York, and on the 26th of April this
laudable practice first began. There is extant
a letter from Dr. Grenville to the precentor on
this subject, in which he speaks in very enthu-
siastic terms on this head, declaring "hee is
ready to absolve him from all his sins, for the
comfortable news hee sends him of the weekly
sacrament being set up in the cathedrall at
Yorke, &c. &c."

The precentor began his second residence
at York the 11th of May, and on the 14th
was elected a procurator for King James's con-
vocation, which was to open on the 20th of
the same month.

King James having very soon after the death
of his brother Charles II. published certain
papers, said to have been found in his late
majesty's box, and which pretended to give an
account of the reasons which induced him to
turn to the religion of Rome, the precentor
wrote short, but severe *animadversions* upon
them; he likewise did the same thing with
those called *the duchess's papers*, which gave
a like weak and improbable account of her per-
version to the Romish religion.

If

If the fact of the late King having been converted to the Roman-catholic religion was really true, James was certainly very ill-advised in making it public, as it could only tend to give an unfavourable opinion of his brother's memory, without being in any respect advantageous to himself. If he thought it might tend to pave the way for the introduction of Popery, he was extremely deceived, for it only served to disgust the nation, and put the people more on their guard against any attempts that might be made to establish that religion. Whatever light it is viewed in, it was unwise and impolitic in the last degree; for if true, it was making the hypocrisy and dissimulation of Charles unnecessarily public; if not true, as was *then* very generally believed, it must inevitably expose his own character to just contempt.

In pursuance of the archbishop's injunctions he began to examine the state of the cathedral library in the beginning of July, and with vast pains and trouble proceeded to set it in order.

He presented Mr. Purchas to the rectory of Odington, void by Dr. Long's death about the latter end of the month of August, on condition

CHAP.
VIII.

CHAP. dition of his resigning it to Mr. Thornton,
VIII. when he was of age to be instituted to it.

In the beginning of September, with the assistance of experienced workmen, he took a view of the decays in different parts of the cathedral, and 3500*l.* was judged a moderate estimate to complete the repairs. For the raising this large sum he contrived a petition to the parliament, for a toll of so much per chaldron on coals delivered at Hull, Scarborough, Burlington, and York ; but James about this time differing with his parliament, the design did not *then* take effect.

The middle of the month of October, he published his “ *Discourse concerning Excommunication,*” which he had finished some time before.

An introduction to this tract informs us, that the debauchery, profaneness, schism, and atheism, which had endeavoured to render this ecclesiastical censure ridiculous, gave occasion to his composing this discourse. He divides his subject into three parts, and states,

- I. Its divine original ;
- II. Its universal practice ;
- III. The ends of its institution.

He

He appears sensible that the imprudent use of the power of *excommunication* on occasions which sometimes did not require so heavy a censure, had greatly contributed to diminish that respect in which it had formerly been held.

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VIII.

Whether the Bishop of London, to whom it was dedicated, and who seems to have encouraged him to publish it, at this critical juncture of the affairs of the church, wished to see the practice of excommunication with *Protestants*, well distinguished from the mode of exercising it in the *Church of Rome*; or whether he was desirous of exposing the pretensions of Rome, to excommunicate and exclude from heaven *whom and when she pleased*, at the very time she was making rapid strides to reduce England again under the tyranny of her yoke; or, whether his lordship wished both to these, cannot at this distance of time be ascertained: but the last supposition does not seem unlikely.

About this time he wrote "*Observations on the Breviary of Salisbury*," printed at Paris, in the year 1557. These excellent and masterly *observations* chiefly tend to prove, that the church

CHAP. church of Rome adores fictitious saints ; that
VIII. she asks at their hands all good spiritual things ;
that doctrines contrary to the reigning ones in
the Romish church, are found in this breviary ;
and that there are also in it several *ridiculous*
and *indecent expressions*. It is not certain that
this valuable paper was ever made public.

In this year was published at London another edition of the “ *Church Catechism, with a brief and easy Explanation thereof, for the Help of the meanest Capacities and weakest Memories.* ” — His name was not added to it, but it is the production of his pen ; it first made its appearance in the year 1674. An interleaved copy of this little tract is in the editor’s possession, which has great improvements in the author’s handwriting. The blank leaves betwixt the parts of the *catechism itself* are filled with an exact *analysis* of the whole, and those betwixt the different parts of the *explanation*, are filled with an enlargement and improvement thereof, with proofs selected from the Holy Scriptures. — These manuscript notes appear however to have only been heads of what he spoke by way of discourse, after the *catechumens* had answered the different questions
in

in the catechism itself, and the subjoined explanation. CHAP.
VIII.

He also wrote a “*Paraphrase on the Apostle’s Creed*,” and an application of it; which seems to have been designed to complete the work on the catechism, but to have been too-large to be written on the blank leaf, opposite the Creed in the bound book.

The general assembly of the French clergy having in this year made a complaint to the King, or laid before him an account of the conduct of the Protestants in France, our author wrote “*Remarks on the Account and Petition of the French Clergy*.” The Papists complained that the *reformed* calumnized them, but these remarks prove that *they* calumniated the *reformed*, in order to expose them to persecution. He shews that almost all the doctrines which they call *calumnies* are the heads of the edicts of the council of Trent, or fair consequences deduced from them. Our author must have taken great pains with this little piece, which he concludes with inveighing against persecution.

Having made strict enquiries of old men, and got together juries to view the glebe and

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tithable

CHAP.
VIII.
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tithable lands belonging to his two livings of Stonegrave and Thornton, he delivered an exact terrier of these matters into the court of York, on the last day of this year.

The precentor's care and attention to every thing that regarded the interests of religion cannot be sufficiently commended, and particularly in the instance above-mentioned. If all incumbents, from a sense of that duty which they owe to posterity, as well as to themselves and their families, were thus careful to ascertain the rights of their livings, and to demand their dues, it would be productive of many advantages; and especially would promote a good understanding betwixt a pastor and his flock, by taking away all ground of jealousy and misunderstanding on either side.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

From the end of the year 1685, to his visiting the metropolis with his friend Dr. Grenville.

THE precentor's lady was delivered on the 12th of February, in this year, of a daughter, who was publicly baptized in Stonegrave church on the 16th of the same month, and named Mary; her sponsors were the Rev. Tobias Conyers, Mrs. Denton, and Mrs. Thornton.

CHAP.
IX.
1686.

On the 28th of this month, he remarks, that he had the uncommon satisfaction of publicly catechizing his eldest daughter in Stonegrave church, and she acquitted herself extremely well, though she had not yet attained her fifth year. This is a striking example of the advantage of early instruction, and a strong proof of the great pains he took in training up his children early in the principles of our most holy religion.

“Archbishop Dolben,” says the precentor, “my worthy patron and friend, died on the 11th of April, 1686, rather of grief at the me-

CHAP. *lancholy prospect of public affairs, than of the*
 IX. *small-pox.*" He was buried in the cathedral
 at York, the precentor assisting in carrying him
 to his grave. "He was a prelate," continues
 he, "of great presence, ready parts, grateful
 conversation, and wondrous generosity. He
 gave his chapel-plate to the cathedral, and
 above three hundred volumes of great value to
 the library, and was much lamented by all
 good men."

Such is the character which the precentor
 gives of this good archbishop; and as it ap-
 pears that he possessed great sensibility, and
 much zeal for the success of the Protestant re-
 ligion, it is not surprizing he should be so
 much affected at seeing King James II. not
 only *publicly profess the Roman-catholic religion,*
 but endeavour by the most unjustifiable means
to establish it in this kingdom on the ruins and
 subversion of the Protestant reformed faith.—
 Though cut off by the *small-pox*, added to the
 anxiety of his mind as above described, before
 he had enjoyed his elevation to the see of York
 three complete years, yet in that space of time
 he had rendered himself *dear to all good men,*
 and was sincerely *lamented* by them.

The

The jurisdiction of the see of York being
resigned into the hands of the dean and chap-
ter during the vacancy, the dean, the precentor,
and Dr. Watkinson the chancellor, were con-
stituted heads of the approaching synod and
convocation, fixed for the 11th of May.

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The Archbishop of Canterbury in the noblest
and most engaging manner offered the living
of All-Hallows Barking, in Tower-street, Lon-
don, on the 3d day of June, in this year, to the
precentor, who with grateful acknowledgements
declined accepting the same.

Here is another striking proof how much
the Archbishop of Canterbury had at heart
the object of prevailing with the precentor to
reside in his province. His grace gladly seized
the opportunity of the vacancy of the see of
York to endeavour to win him to his wishes,
ere a new archbishop should find out his
merit, and endeavour by every act of kindness,
respect, and attention, to fix him in the north.
It is very likely that the same amiable motive
of indulging his lady's partiality to her na-
tive country, and her dislike to a town-life,
which had *formerly* induced him to decline
the acceptance of the favours offered him by

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his grace of Canterbury, was the occasion of his excusing himself *in the present instance*: he also perhaps had other private motives which might operate powerfully upon him; as the friendships he had contracted with learned men in the county of York, which he would have been sorry to give up—the desire it was natural he should indulge of being near Mrs. Thornton, for whom he had a most affectionate regard—and an attachment to the residence of that lady, which had been the scene of so much prosperity and happiness to him.

Whether some, or all these considerations, had their weight in determining him to continue in the north; yet certainly the above fact as it is here related, does honour to the archbishop's generosity in making the offer, and to his modesty in declining the acceptance of it.

The Bishop of Ely* addressed a letter in the month of June to Dr. Comber, in which he promised to render all the assistance possible in filling up the void dignities of the church of York, during the vacancy of the see, with learned, pious, and worthy ministers. The

* Dr. Francis Turner.

bishop

bishop treats Dr. Comber with the greatest respect throughout the whole of this letter, in the beginning of which he styles him his "*very worthy friend*," and concludes in these terms: "I do heartily thank you for your many learned and most acceptable presents, and for your owne worthy acquaintance; and *entreating the continuance of your friendship*, I remain,
Rev. Sir,

Your most affectionate brother and servant,
FRAN. ELY."

His many learned and pious treatises on religious subjects, and particularly his "*Explanation of the Church Catechism*," appear to have rendered his name very celebrated; and many persons seem to have entertained an high veneration for his character who were strangers to his person. In proof of this remark a letter is extant from a Mrs. Neale, which, though rather long, is throughout the whole so *sensible* and *pious*, and withal so honourable a testimony of the precentor's worth, and the universal respect attached to his name, that 'tis hoped the christian reader will have as great pleasure in perusing it, as the editor has in transcribing it.

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“ Rev. Sir,

“ You may possibly be surprized to see a letter from a person whom you know not, and whom not so much as a favourable or lucky chance has ever given occasion to speak to you. I do not indeed know how this may be *represented**, but that pious and charitable zeal which is visible in the great pains you have taken to instruct and confirm the professors of our most excellent religion, makes me hope favourably ; and upon that account, sir, I shall make bold to acquaint you with my desire.

Being importuned by some friends to come to this town with some children, whom Almighty God hath been pleased to deprive both of father and mother, and the care of their education being for some time *remitted* to me ; the sense I have of my own inability, makes me think myself obliged, both upon that account, and likewise in point of affection, as they are my relations, to get the best advice and assistance I can for them. It would be impertinent in me to begin a discourse to you of the necessity there is of cultivating such young plants, nor need I say (if I could) how

* Received.

much

much the adorning of *that nobler part which will live for ever*, is to be preferred before the exterior accomplishments of the body, how advantageous and agreeable soever. Almighty God (may he grant them thankful hearts for his bounty) hath been pleased to give them *a sufficient competency*, and thereby enabled them to purchase one, in a good measure, and, I doubt not but his spirit, and the directions of those upon whom it is in a more peculiar and plentiful manner effused, will effect the other, when due endeavour is used.

“ I should desire of you no more, sir, than that you would be pleased to direct me in the choice of some books for them, their intellects for their years, together with a tractable temper common to them all, giving tolerable hopes of improvement, but that I believe it might be of great advantage to them if they were brought acquainted with some of those venerable persons who are appointed the guides of souls, and whom we are taught to reverence both for their virtue and office sake : a word from such a person will make more impression than the repeated instruction of other persons, whose arguments, as they are many degrees
short

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short of *their* weight and authority, so seldom prevail so far as to gain a belief so firm as to secure the affections : whereas the words (may I not say) of the preacher, by the blessing of God are as *goads and nails fastened by the masters of the assembly*. So that I should think it a great happiness, if, at some spare minutes, you would permit them to wait on you, and that you would vouchsafe to catechize them. Indeed I can speak by experience, that I received more satisfaction in hearing some short discourses, made by some of the London divines while I was there, upon the catechism, than by a great many sermons though excellent ones, and I have often wished them the like advantage, and hope I shall be so fortunate as to obtain it from you. The only debate I have had has been about the giving you this trouble, but, since it is only in pursuance of your worthy employment, which, as it is your business, so doubtless is it your delight, and directly tending to the honour and glory of your great master, I have ventured on it: for as I think with myself that I should not fail to consult the physician for them, did I apprehend the least danger to their bodies, so, I ought

ought to omit nothing which may be conducive to the securing the jewels of which those are only the cases. CHAP.
IX.

“ And now, sir, if you do but receive this with your wonted candour, (*for I am no stranger to your character though I am to yourself,*) it will be great satisfaction to,

Reverend Sir,

Your most humble,

(and, as I am a sharer in your
public benefits,)

July 16th, grateful, and obedient servant,

1686.

ELIZABETH NEALE.”

At the particular request of Charles Tancred, of Whixley, esq; this year high sheriff for the county of York, he preached the assize sermon in the cathedral of York, before the judges *Wright* and *Powell*, taking his text from Micah vi. 8.

Finding in the cathedral library many duplicates of different works, and in some instances triplicates, at the request of the dean and chapter he took upon himself the trouble of disposing of them to the best advantage; he laid out 80l. and upwards in the purchase of
new

CHAP. new books, and 3ol. in the writing of cata-
IX. logues real and alphabetical, putting up shelves,
binding books, &c. &c. so that, after much
pains, he put the library into the most exact
order.

The Earl of Holderness desiring to renew the lease of Hornby, held under the chapter of York, the precentor, in the course of this business, discovered one hundred and twenty acres of rich land, which had formerly belonged to the rectory there, and which in the course of time had been lost by negligence and inattention. He persuaded "the good earl," as he calls him, to cause one hundred and twenty acres of good land to be set out, bounded, and entered upon the lease, and allowed expressly by himself, his son, and grandson, to be in lieu of the glebe subtracted as above: on the 9th day of December following he took possession of the same in the name of the dean and chapter of York.

With the advice and assistance of the Bishop of Ely, on the 6th day of November, he prevailed on the Earl of Rochester, at that time lord treasurer, to restore to the dean and chapter of York divers lands in Yorkshire, and
arrears

arrears of rent since the vacancy, which about
 the year 1626, had been given by the old Duke
 of Buckingham in exchange for York-Place,
 in London. His lordship at length agreed to
 to settle those lands in perpetuity on the dean
 and chapter, to the great advantage of that
 church.

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The Rev. Dr. Matthew Hutton, who seems
 from the style of his numerous letters yet ex-
 tant, to have been the intimate friend of Dr.
 Comber, addressed a letter to him from London,
 dated the 23d of November, 1616; in which
 amongst many other matters, he informs him,
 that according to his desire he had presented
 his respects to the Bishop of Bath and Wells*,
 who in the next letter returned him these
 words: “Dr. Comber I know by his writings,
 but never saw him unlesse once, and that
 transiently, but I receive commendations from
soe very good and learned a person much the
 more kindly, in regard he offers me his friend-
 ship, which I shall value very highly: and I
 entreat you to return him my hearty acknow-
 ledgements and respects. He is one of those

* Dr. Kenn.

who

CHAP. *who will stand in the gap*, I beseech God to pre-
 IX. serve and support him."

An eulogy like this pronounced by so pious a bishop may justly be considered as an honour to any man. His lordship's prophecy of the precentor was exactly fulfilled, for he *effectually stood in the gap*: but, alas! the pious bishop himself *deserted it*, for although he was one of those who in the year 1688 petitioned King James II. to be excused sending the *Declaration of Liberty of Conscience* to his clergy; yet among the bishops who refused to take the oaths to King William and Queen Mary we find the name of Dr. Kenn. It may be, perhaps, the bishop declined taking the oaths from conscientious motives; as was the case with many very pious men. Dr. H—'s letter contains a very particular account of the degradation of the celebrated Mr. Samuel Johnson, in the following words:

"I went last Saturday to see the ceremony of the degradation of Mr. Johnson in the Chapter-House at St. Paul's. He behaved himself most say very well, but first excepted against their jurisdiction, saying that the *Bishop of London*

don was his ordinary, and according to the canon he was to be tried by him. The bishops told him *they* proceeded against him according to the canon, *the Bishop of London being suspended*. He answered that then the *Archbishop of Canterbury was his ordinary and metropolitan*: but they would not allow any thing against their authority, which they were fully satisfied of. The Bishop of Durham spoke all except a word or two. He told him they proceeded against him in order to the execution of the sentence pronounced against him by the King's Bench. Johnson answered, he hoped they would try him themselves, and not be only the *echo* to the other court, and only say *Amen* to what they said or did: and that they might very well believe all sentences given in that court have not been found to be always just, when they have been afterwards removed to another court. He told them also, that their lordships might consider, that preaching against popery, or many sorts of speeches, might by inuendoes, and interpretations, be made *sedition* and *treason*; and that what he had written, was *the opinion of all the bishops in Queen Elizabeth's days*. The Bishop of Rochester replied,

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replied, that was the most malicious thing he could say of the Church of England. To whom Johnson replied, but 'tis true, my lord. Johnson further told them, that the sentence against him, viz. *the whipping*, was the punishment of a dog, and not of a man, and that he had rather have been hanged at Westminster, and that his orders and gown were dearer to him than his life.

After the sentence was past, the Bishop of Durham ordered the officer to deliver a bible into Mr. Johnson's hands, which having done, he was commanded to take it from him. After that, a square cap was set upon his head, and the officer ordered to take it off. Then the officer took off his gown, and after that his girdle: and when he was about to take off his cassock too, the bishop said it was enough, he might leave him that. After all, the bishop told him he delivered him over to the secular power, as a mere laick. Johnson protested against the sentence, and appealed to the King's delegates in Chancery, and was then carried back to Newgate, and yesterday stood in the pillory, at Westminster, in his cassock, but preached to the people through the wood.—

There

There were eight divines that were assessors to the bishops, and signed with them the sentence; the Dean of Windsor, Dr. Holder, Dr. Grove, Dr. Scot, Dr. Sherlock, Dr. Cave, Dr. Bridge, and Dr. Dove." CHAP.
IX.

In a letter from Dr. Hutton to Dr. Comber, dated November 30th, seven days after writing the above account, he says, "Mr. Johnson is to be whipped to-morrow, no intercession will prevail, though 'tis said the Lady Ruffel* offered 300l. to get it off."

In another letter from Dr. H. dated December 4th, he says, "Mr. Johnson was whipped on Wednesday, but civilly used by the new hangman, Jack Ketch being buried two days before."

The precentor finding how greatly he had been deceived in the favourable sentiments he had entertained of King James's moderation, as mentioned in his pamphlet intitled "*Religion and Royalty*," written and published when the 1687.

* Johnson had been chaplain to Lord Ruffel, soon after whose fatal catastrophe he wrote a paper to justify those sentiments which had brought his lordship to the scaffold; in which he endeavoured to prove, that *resistance may be used, in case our religion and right should be invaded*. See Johnson's Works, p. 159, and Birch's Life of Archbishop Tillotson, p. 123.

Q

King

CHAP.
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King was Duke of York, and with the hope of satisfying the minds of men of the impolicy of passing the *Exclusion-Bill*, determined now to repair his error by combating *at every hazard* the rapid progress of popery. In the beginning of his reign, the King had been very desirous of impressing on the minds of his subjects an high opinion of his moderation, justice, and sincerity. In his first declaration to his privy council after his succession to the throne, and shortly after in his address to both houses of parliament, he repeated the assurance, “that he would make it his endeavour to preserve the government *both in church and state* as it was then by law established.” Nothing however could be farther from the King’s intention than to do what he had so solemnly and voluntarily promised, as the event most clearly and undeniably proved. For no sooner had he firmly established himself on the throne, prevailed on the parliament to grant him an unprecedented large annual revenue *for life*, and, under various false pretences, got together a large standing army to bear him through all his arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings, than he instantly threw off the mask of hypocrisy, which had been
been

been hitherto so necessary to conceal the tendency of his proceedings, and the full extent of his designs stood confessed to all the world.

The King seemed fully bent on the establishment of POPERY and ARBITRARY POWER. If he had contented himself with the possession of the *latter*, without insisting upon the establishment of a religion which the English nation so justly detested, he would probably have carried his point without much difficulty.—The doctrine of *passive obedience* had so long been sounded in the ears of men, that they began to persuade themselves it formed, or ought to form a part of the constitution and government of the kingdom. But having discovered to his people that he wished to be set free from the restraints of law, chiefly that he might force upon them a religion so disgusting to them, his *parliament* and his *clergy*, however devoted to him in other respects, were determined not to betray their religion to him, which they informed him “*was dearer to them than their lives.*” His obstinacy in this particular, and his impolitic violence in carrying it into effect at a moment when his subjects were in such a frame of mind as the above

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decla-

CHAP. declaration describes, in the end was the cause
IX. of his losing his crown.

At this time however the Papists were triumphant. The only road to preferment *now*, was to be a professor and promoter of *popery*, and all the places of honour, trust, and power, were committed to them. The King proceeded so far in the grand scheme he had so much at heart, as to appoint and set up an *ecclesiastical commission* for the management and regulation of the affairs of the church, armed with full power to exercise all manner of jurisdiction in spiritual and ecclesiastical matters. Many of the members of this commission were known Catholics, and the Protestant members of it could not be supposed to have much influence in the reign of a popish King.

In the preceding year Dr. Henry Compton, Bishop of London, had been suspended from the exercise of his episcopal office, for the concern he had in the affair of *Dr. Sharp*, who, in the following reign, was made Archbishop of York, as will be seen hereafter. At this time the popish priests, with the concurrence and permission of the King, were very busy in making profelytes to the Roman-catholic

tholic faith : the precentor perceiving this, CHAP. IX. in the beginning of the year, published “*A plain Answer to the plausible Arguments of a Popish Priest from Scripture ;*” but did not add his name to it. The above piece is a dialogue betwixt a popish priest, and a layman of the Church of England, and it fully discovers the weakness and fallacy of the arguments made use of by the Papists.

Probably about this time was published a new edition of a popish book called “*Touchstone,*” pretending that protestant bibles contradict their religion. It had been twice answered, once by Bishop Patrick. Our author being justly provoked at its being again dispersed, wrote in a forenoon a brief answer to the first chapter of it, shewing that *all* the texts produced to shew that there is any *infallible* rule of faith in the church, are not to the purpose. He likewise wrote two letters on the subject of the above pamphlet, one to a gentleman in whose parish it had been dispersed, and another to the Papist who dispersed them. He threatened that if they did not suppress the book he would answer it all, the interpretations

Q₃ of

CHAP. of scriptures contained therein being as ill-
IX. founded as those of the Quakers.

Upon other occasions he had endeavoured to convince Quakers of their errors. One Joseph Wyeth, having, under the title of "*Snake in the Grass*," answered a book *against Quakers*, the precentor wrote observations thereon as he went through it; and then reduced the substance of them to a regular confutation of the Quaker's pretence to a *light within*, in a letter addressed to one Mr. Gibson. Long before this he had written "*Some Considerations touching the Quakers; tending to settle such as are tempted by them.*" Having in this last-mentioned piece, shewn the propriety of consulting a *learned clergyman* when a man is tempted by the Quakers, he desires the person tempted to consider,

I. Whether he may not be saved in the Church of England.

II. What reason there can be to forsake this church for a conventicle sprung up within forty years.

III. That holiness is as much pressed in the Church of England as it can be in any church.

Lastly,

Lastly. That whatsoever amongst the Quakers is good, is derived from the Church of England. CHAP.
IX.

In this year the author of the “*Fourth Vindication of the Representer and Misrepresenter &c.*” attacked the precentor’s “*Advice to the Roman-Catholics,*” in page 22, and page 23. He was the first of that party who attempted to give any answer to it, or censure of it; and all he could do was to pick out *two quotations* from nearly *four hundred*, on which to fix the charge of falsehood. Our author wrote a *short answer*, and shewed, that as to the *former*, though he had not observed that Gregory restricted the liberty of marrying to the inferior clergy, yet he had not falsified that father; and as to the *latter*, he shewed, that his charge of blasphemy against Bellarmine is true, for though he (Bellarmine) produces a text or two to countenance his making men *their own redeemers*, yet as these *prove nothing*, the charge is good.

This *short answer* he sent to London in a letter to the answerer of the Vindication, to be printed with the rest of the “*Answer to*
Q 4
the

CHAP. *the fourth Vindication, &c.*" but, as it arrived
 IX. { too-late to be printed with it, he made himself very easy, and resolved to take no public notice of the charge, till the Papists gave him more provocation.

The encouragement which popery now met with at court, induced one of its champions to attack Dr. Sherlock's "*Preservative against Popery*," in a pamphlet which bore in the title-page, "with allowance." The writer having begun with charging the reformers with *falsifying* from Tyndall to Tennison, complains that "*The Advice, &c. first set forth by Dr. Cumber in the time of the pretended plot* (when whatever was *boldly said* or *sworn* against *innocence* or *religion*, though false to the degree of *impossibility*, was greedily swallowed) is a fair instance in this case, whence such *false citations*, though they bore in the front of a preface all assurance of truth, can be produced by dozens." After such a charge as this he could no longer sit silent, but prepared a preface to a fifth edition of his piece, and answers,

I. That this writer cannot know Dr. Comber to have set forth that book, the editor of
 that

that stolen edition, to which alone the doctor's name was put, having owned, that he only ^{CHAP. IX.} guessed him to be the author.

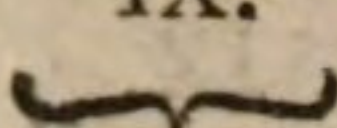
II. That he asserts a falsehood in saying, that it was set out *first* in the time of the *Po-pish plot* in 1678; for it was set out in 1674, and that edition and a second also sold before 1676, and the next year a third edition with all the quotations; and that he purposely delayed a new edition in 1678, on account of the disadvantages Papists then lay under.

III. That he asserts a falsehood in ascribing the good reception of this work to a plot which was not then known.

IV. That he asserts a falsehood in charging it with falsehood to the degree of *impossibilities*, whereas all the mistakes of the author of that work are trivial oversights, no-wise necessary to his main point.

V. That he has not produced one instance of falsification.

He then answers the two former mistakes charged on him, and affirms that he has *nicely examined* all his other quotations, and will abide by all his charges against popery. Thus the Papists were so far from gaining their point, that

CHAP. that they evidently lost much ground by this
IX.  attack on our author's integrity.

The precentor's great reputation caused him in these critical times to be often consulted as a casuist in matters of religion and conscience, and in particular about this time the Lady Cary, a young, wealthy, and pious widow, in Staffordshire, commenced a correspondence with him. She appears from her letters which are yet extant to have possessed a good natural understanding, but, by affliction and ill-health, to be brought into a kind of *religious melancholy*. She complains of "coldness in devotion," and consults him also about "dispensing with vows," and "holding church lands." He answers her with the plainness and compassion of a manly and rational divine, clears up her difficulties, directs her charity, and gives her seasonable and rational comfort.

About this time the precentor preached two sermons on occasion of the frequent duels in and about the city of York; and on the 30th of April published "*A short Discourse against Duels.*" This excellent little tract takes a view of the practice of single combat from the earliest times, and argues against it in the most unanswerable

ble manner both on the principles of *reason* and those of *religion*. The following curious account relating to the duel betwixt the Duke of Lancaster and the Duke of Brunswick in the year 1352, is found in the above little tract, which shews that at that period of time, the *single combat* was considered as the *test of innocence or guilt*, and as such the *prayers of the church* were obtained for an *happy event*. “ Sometimes the church seems to comply further, even to appoint *public prayers for the success of duels*, as appears in the instance of Henry Duke of Lancaster, anno 1352, who having been informed of some reproachful words spoken against him by the Duke of Brunswick, resolved to sail over to France and fight him. But before he committed his *innocence to the trial of the sword*, he desired *the bishops of England to assist him with their prayers*, and to *recommend him and his cause to the mercy of God*. Accordingly Radulph. de Salopia, Bishop of Bath and Wells enjoined all the clergy of his diocese to exhort the people in their several cures every *sunday and holiday*, with all humility and devotion, to beg of God, who is the giver of victory, that he would appear for
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CHAP.
IX.

the honour of his holy name, and the clearing the truth of the noble duke, and the glory of the English nation, by *giving success to his arms.*" The original from which the above account is taken, is in Latin, in the Regist. of Radulph. de Salopia, Bishop of Bath and Wells, fol. 413.

On the 4th day of April in this year, King James published his "*Declaration for Liberty of Conscience,*" and at the same time took off all the penal laws which had been made against Catholics, and did away all the disabling clauses; hereby authorizing them to exercise their religion publicly, and putting them into the same *legal* capacity of enjoying places and offices as the Protestants themselves. All true Protestants justly considered this as a mortal blow to their religion, and plainly perceived it was a preliminary step to the total abolition of the reformed faith, and the introduction of popery in its stead: the precentor, in particular, was of the number of those who entertained this opinion of it, from the first moment of its publication.

Several of the bishops, who were justly suspected to be Papists in their hearts, prevailed with

with their clergy to join in an “*Address of thanks*” to the King, for his “*Declaration, &c.*” CHAP.
IX.
amongst whom were Crew, Bishop of Durham, and Cartwright, Bishop of Chester, the last mentioned bishop having been exalted to that see by James, for infamously betraying his honour, and shamelessly prostituting his conscience. The see of York being kept vacant ever since the death of the last good archbishop, Cartwright wrote a letter to the Dean of York, urging him to use his utmost endeavours to prevail on his chapter, to send a similar “*Address of thanks*” to the King. The precentor seeing through Cartwright’s jesuitical design, which was by *flattery* and *vile compliance* to encourage the King in oppressing the Protestants, so effectually opposed this attempt, that not a single individual set his hand to the address. By means of his exertions on this occasion the dean was even worse off than Parker, Bishop of Oxford, who prevailed upon one clergyman in his diocese to sign the address, but the dean could not prevail even upon *one*.

Some of the *weakest* of the *dissenters* having been drawn in by the *less honest* to join in the
address

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address of thanks from an ignorance of the consequences of what they were doing, some one addressed “*A seasonable Letter to the Dissenters by a Conformist* ;” in which they were guarded against the common danger which equally threatened both parties, and were warned not to aid the common foe by an address of thanks, for what was deserving of the *utmost abhorrence and detestation*. The precentor, greatly approving the contents of this letter, determined to favour the conformists scheme, by answering him under the character and signature of a “*Dissenter* :” in which reply he endeavoured to shew, that none, but *very weak* or *very wicked* men, could be deceived by this snare which the government had laid.

In the month of May in this year the precentor went to London with his friend Dr. Grenville in his coach, visiting Peterborough and Cambridge in his way, and arrived in the metropolis the beginning of June. He preached before the members of the Yorkshire club at Bow Church, on the 16th of June, at the particular request of Lord Latimer, chief steward, and after dinner at Merchant-Taylor’s-Hall, he so fully acquainted them with
the

the design of Cartwright's address, that he put them on their guard, and effectually prevented its passing there. CHAP.
IX.

This Cartwright, unworthy the name of Christian, and much more undeserving that of bishop; bearing a mortal hatred to the precentor for his spirited and manly conduct on the above occasion, endeavoured to exasperate the King against him by false accusations, and to get his brother turned out of a lucrative situation in the post-office; but being unable to maintain his charge, was obliged to retract his calumny before two or three lords.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

From his visiting the metropolis with Dr. Grenville, to the end of the year 1688.

CHAP.
X.
1687.

THE times at which we are now arrived were truly deplorable for the interests of the protestant religion. “At this time,” says the precentor, “with grief and amazement, I saw and heard of the proceedings of the high-commission-court against the fellows of Magdalen-College, Oxford; who were not suffered to plead, but enjoined to go home and obey the King, or threatened with present suspension and deprivation: and to my grief,” adds he, “I saw two protestant bishops* sit there as judges.”

It may not be amiss to give some little account of the extraordinary proceedings alluded to in the above account. King James as we have already remarked, was determined at all events to introduce the Roman-Catholic religion, and to promote this end had already advanced several Papists to the first places of *trust* and *power* in the kingdom. They had

* Crew, Bishop of Durham, and Sprat, Bishop of Rochester.
eagerly

eagerly desired to obtain degrees and preferments in the universities, as a previous step to becoming masters of colleges, and thus gradually to introduce popery into those learned seminaries. The King, though desirous of gratifying them in this respect, did not however find it an easy matter when he attempted to put it in execution. He had before this sent his *mandate* to the university of Cambridge to elect Alban Francis, a popish priest, to the degree of M. A. but that university having represented to his majesty that it was contrary to their statutes, declined admitting him.—The King sent a second letter, commanding them to do it “*at their peril.*” On their again declining it by the mouth of their vice-chancellor, he was examined by the *High-Commission-Court*, and persisting in the refusal, was by that court deprived of his office, but still the university continued firm to their purpose.

His majesty being thus defeated in his attempts at Cambridge, determined to try the firmness of the university of Oxford. On the presidency of Magdalen-College becoming vacant by the death of Dr. Clark, the King

R

sent

CHAP. sent his *special mandate* for the election of An-
X.
thony Farmer, a man of bad character, and who had promised to become a Papist. Notwithstanding the King's mandate, they proceeded to the election, and chose *Dr. Hough* by a great majority. The King then withdrew his mandate from Farmer and gave it to *Dr. Parker*, Bishop of Oxford, who it seems was as objectionable as the other, and therefore they adhered to their first election.—The King then came down in person to Oxford, and threatened in case of their refusal “*to make them feel the weight of his hand.*” This however produced no effect, and twenty-five fellows out of twenty-seven, refusing to subscribe a declaration of submission to the King, for what he called their contumelious behaviour, were deprived of their fellowships, expelled the college, and declared incapable of holding any ecclesiastical benefice or dignity. Finally, the Bishop of Oxford was forcibly put in possession of the lodge, and the college was filled with Papists.

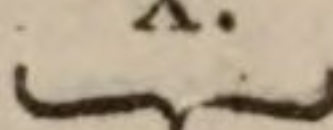
The above is a general account of this *unprecedented* and *arbitrary* proceeding, but as it is likewise the most daring and open attack upon
upon

upon the privileges of the university, and the rights of the subject, that is to be found on record, it is presumed the curious reader will not be displeased with a minute detail of the deprivation of Dr. Hough, as it is related by an eye witness. On the 23d of October, 1687, Dr. Matthew Hutton wrote a letter to the precentor, and therein gave the following account of this transaction.

“ On the 20th [October] the Lord Bishop of Chester, Lord Chief Justice Wright, and Baron Jenner, came to Oxford as visitors (appointed by the King) of Magdalen-College, and were met at some distance from the town by all the troops there quartered. On the 21st the said commissioners and visitors came to the chapel of the said college, and from thence adjourned to the hall, where after their commission was read, the Bishop of Chester made a very long speech reflecting on the contumacy and disobedience of that college, and withal on the university for not addressing, &c. The court then adjourned until two in the afternoon, at which time they met, and sat in the hall of the college: all the fellows were called by name, and all the scholars and ser-

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vants of the college. Dr. Hough the president was asked several questions : as, whether upon second thoughts, he were willing to submit to the sentence before given by the commissioners above. His answer was to this effect ; that he looked upon such sentence to be *null*, as being pronounced against him without his being ever cited, or appearing personally, or by proxy in any court of justice, *and possibly this was the first instance of any person being dispossessed of a freehold without such citation and appearance, since any laws obtained in England.* Another question put to the president was, whether he would deliver up the keys of the president's lodge, treasury, &c. to which he replied, that being duly elected with as much formality as any president had ever before been, and admitted by the Bishop of Winton, he looked upon himself as rightly possessed of the place, and all rights thereunto belonging, and so long as he acted nothing contrary to the statutes of the realm, or the college, though the Bishop of Winton, whom he owned as his ordinary visitor, should demand them, he would not deliver them.— When they asked him whether he owned and submitted

submitted to this their visitation? he answered, CHAP.
he did so far as was consistent with the statutes X.
of the realm, and of the college, and no further. 
The Bishop of Chester told him he must needs look upon himself as an intruder, *since the King had interposed*; the president replied, if an intruder, such an one as the Bishop of Winton and the fellows had made. Bishop of Chester told him the King had usually put presidents into that college. The president replied, he was the *twenty-first* (I think) that was elected, and if the King had formerly recommended any, they were such as were capable by the college statutes. Then the Bishop of Chester demanded of the fellows why they did not obey the King's mandate; they replied, they had proceeded to act as their statutes directed, to which they were sworn, and could not therefore chuse Mr. Farmer, he being altogether incapable. Then the Bishop of Chester asked them, since they were so strict to the letter of their statute, *why mass had not been said by them as required?* To which the president said, that besides the statutes of the realm forbidding this, and requiring the service according to the liturgy of

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the Church of England, the doing thereof was unlawful, and consequently there was no obligation to conform thereto. Mr. Charnock, one of the fellows, a Roman-catholic, would have said something then, which the visitors did not well understand. The president then told them, that gentleman was for the mass; the bishop replied, but so am not I. After some other questions, Dr. Rogers, doctor of music, presented a petition to be restored to the place of organist which he had before enjoyed in the college. The court then adjourned to the common-room, and awhile after, till eight the next morning.

“ Being met the next day the steward of the college was first called in, none being permitted to come into the room with him, and was questioned about the colleges rents and fines. After him Dr. Bailey was called in. About ten o’clock the president and fellows were all called in, the Bishop of Chester then *three times* pronounced words to this effect: “ Dr. John Hough you are commanded to depart peaceably from the lodgings of the president of Magdalen-College, and to act no more as president, or pretended president of the same.”

Then

Then the bishop ordered the register of their commission to strike his name out of the but-tery books, and then to forbid and admonish the fellows no longer to own and respect Dr. Hough as their president. After this the King's mandate was read for admitting the Bishop of Oxford president, dated August 14th. When the Bishop of Chester had read the sentence against the president, Dr. Hough desired *some reason might be given him for such sentence*, which was not done; in conclusion the president told them, he had not yet received any reason for such sentence, and therefore saw no reason to obey it. All being then for awhile ordered to withdraw, the fellows were after some consultation called in one by one, and asked severally, "whether they would assist at the admission of the Bishop of Oxford, and own him as their president." All refused except Dr. Thomas Smith, (he that wrote "*The Present State of the Greek Church*,") and Mr. Charnock, a Roman-catholic. The court then adjourned till two in the afternoon. They met at the time appointed, and half an hour after, Dr. Hough came in, and desired liberty to speak, which being granted, he spake to

CHAP. this purpose. Since their lordships had taken
X. upon them to dispossess him of the place of
president of Magdalen-College, and all those
rights he was lawfully invested in, he did
therefore protest against all these proceedings,
and whatever hereafter should be made in pre-
judice of him, and his undoubted rights, as
illegal, unjust, and null, and appealed to his
sovereign lord the King in his courts of jus-
tice. This protestation was registered. After
this followed a very great *hum* by the company
present, which much incensed the visitors, and
Dr. Hough was charged as the cause of it, but
he declared it was no ways occasioned or de-
signed by him, that no one there knew what
he designed to speak, and that he was sorry it
so happened. In conclusion the Lord Chief
Justice threatened to send him to prison im-
mediately, except bail were given for his ap-
pearance to answer this affront, the twelfth
day of the term. This was done, the doctor
being bound in 1000l. and two others in 500l.
each. Then they adjourned till Tuesday.

“The Bishop of Chester apprehended him-
self disrespected, because not waited upon by
the university, and said publickly, among
other

other things, that he saw one in the company, a doctor too, who had affronted him: for being in a bookseller's shop as he passed by in his coach, *he cocked his hat and grinned at him*, as he supposed, though he himself put off his hat as he passed along. CHAP.
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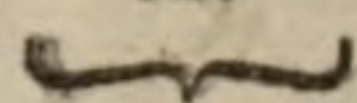
“ Dr. Hough desired a copy of their commission, but was denied, the commissioners referring him to that recorded.

“ Some of the fellows gave in their answer in writing, when they were asked if they would assist at the admission of the Bishop of Oxon, among whom one answered, *he would be passive*; they bid him explain himself; but he told them, it was an easy word, and he could not find any other to explain it by. When one Mr. Cradock was asked his opinion, he answered in writing thus. Six years ago, I was made fellow of this society, at which time by the King's permission, I took an oath that I would receive no dispensation against my local statutes, and therefore being now called upon to admit the Bishop of Oxon, I cannot consent thereto, nor can my obedience cease to Dr. Hough who was statutably elected.

“ At

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“At first Dr. Fairfax did not appear, but afterwards sent word to Mr. Atterbury, that he would be forthcoming when he was called : but I do not hear that he was called for.

“The master of Baliol-College, Dr. Venn, vice-chancellor last year, being dead, 'tis thought these visitors have an *inhibition* to elect, but I hear the college intend to elect this day, *if it be not served.*”

Thus, by the most tyrannical and arbitrary steps, James endeavoured to force the Roman-catholic religion upon his subjects, without the least colour or pretence of law or justice for so doing ; and, by these proceedings, drew down upon his head a more speedy and severe vengeance.—Although the Bishop of Chester and the other visitors, did not think proper, *in words*, to give any reply to Dr. Hough when he desired a *reason* to be given for his deprivation, yet, certainly, *their actions* suggested the following answer, “*Hoc volo, sic jubeo, sit pro ratione voluntas.*”

Mr. Thornton having left college, and being of age to take priest's orders, Dr. Comber presented him to the rectory of Odington, which

which Mr. Purchas had held for him, and now resigned in his favour.

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In this year he sent privately to the press, (as he expresses himself,) “*A Discourse concerning the second Nicene-Council, and the Image-Worship established thereby.*” He observes, that “the King’s example and encouragement, began to cause the worship of images to be openly practised in many cities in the kingdom.”

The *imprimatur*, by Needham, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, is dated 25th of November; the book itself was printed by Walter Kettleby, at the Pope’s Head, Saint Paul’s Church-yard. This man shewed a very commendable courage, in venturing to publish things of this sort at this dangerous season, and, it is more than probable, his old bookseller durst not undertake it.

If we consider the critical time at which this tract was written, the motive which urged him to write it, and the intrinsic merit of the performance itself, this piece lays claim to being one of our author’s very best compositions.

The publisher informs his readers, “that on the first sight of a late book intitled, “*The Fallibility of the Roman Church demonstrated,*
from

CHAP. *from the manifest Errors of the second Nicene and*
 X. *Trent-Council, &c.*" he thought this piece
 would be unnecessary, but upon a minute
 examination he found the contrary.

"The design of the former," he says, "is to shew, that the Church of Rome and her councils have actually erred, in making image-worship a tradition of the apostles: but this latter, having given an historical account of the second Nicene-Council, and pourtrayed the characters of its chief promoters, discovers its *mistakes* and *impostures*, and that it became at last of no authority, and in fact contradicts the doctrine of the Church of Rome itself in many particulars."

A preface which is subjoined, shews the progress that was made in image-worship from the first ages of christianity, and the artifices made use of by the popish editors of councils, to make this seem a catholic one. Then follows a large and useful table of contents, the heads of which are as follow:

"I. Of the occasion and proceedings of the second council of Nice.

"II. Of the falsehood of divers passages in the council.

"III. Of

“ III. Of their proofs for image-worship taken from the holy scriptures. CHAP.
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“ IV. Of their proofs from antiquity and tradition.

“ V. Of their answers to the testimonies from scripture and antiquity urged against them.

“ VI. Of the authority and credit of this council.

“ VII. Of such passages in the council as do not agree with the present opinions of the Roman-catholics.”

At the same time, and in the same manner, he sent to the press the *second part* of the “ *Dialogue betwixt a Popish Priest and a Layman of the Church of England ; being an Answer to the plausible Arguments of the Papists from Antiquity.* ”

Every impartial person must confess, these were noble stands which the precentor made for the Protestant faith, and excellent shields against the insidious arts of the Church of Rome.

“ Expecting,” says he, “ I should be deprived for my zeal against popery,” (and indeed he might well expect it,) “ I purchased a lease at Useburne, and afterwards repaired the

CHAP. the house there, for a retreat to my poor wife
X. and family in the dismal times which seemed
now approaching."

It seems as though the precentor was taken under the immediate protection of an overruling Providence, and to that only can we attribute his being preserved from the cruel and vindictive effects of popish bigotry, and the power of the *High-Commission-Court*, which at this time exercised the most unbounded and arbitrary power. Great numbers of Protestants who had not been near so active in suppressing the advances of the Papists, and withstanding their religion, had experienced the full weight of their vengeance, and several of them were suspended from their preferments, *without being suffered to set up any defence*. And indeed, if popery had been triumphant in the end, he must have shared the common fate of all Protestants who had shewn themselves active against it, and would probably have found no safe retirement in any part of England.

The first lady of William Moore, of Oswaldkirk, in the county of York, esq; being tempted, about this time, by the popish priests

priests to make shipwreck of her faith, at her husband's particular request, he gave her such entire satisfaction on the subject of the protestant religion, that she continued firm and unshaken in it till the day of her death.

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There is a manuscript copy of "*Some Considerations touching the Errors of Popery, and concerning the Truth of the Protestant reformed Faith,*" which our author drew up for the use of Mrs. Moore and a Mrs. Norcliffe, who also lived at Oswaldkirk; and who having in like manner been tempted by popish emissaries, had applied to him for advice.

He begins the above little tract, which so well answered the end for which it was written, with setting forth the cruelty of attempting to persuade people, for temporal advantages, to forsake a religion, of the truth of which they were sufficiently satisfied, and he does not fail to observe, that the good life of the tempter is no proof of the goodness of his doctrine.

I. He proves plainly, that the Papists shew no sufficient texts of scripture to establish the innovations they would introduce: and that they discourage, or forbid the common people to read the *holy scriptures*.

II. That

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II. That the pretence of the Papists, *if it were true*, that their religion differs very little from ours, is a strong argument why a Protestant should not quit his own.

III. He urges all the plain arguments against *transubstantiation*; and particularly that of our Lord's holding his own body in his hand.

IV. He exposes the praying to saints, and inveighs against the worshipping of images, particularly any sensible representation of God the Father.

V. He shews the falsity of the doctrine of purgatory, and the use of Latin prayers.

VI. He speaks against confession, indulgences, the Pope's supremacy, &c. &c.

On the 13th of October, he nobly opposed the unjust suspension of Mr. Briggs, "without his having had an hearing of his defence," which the *High-Commission-Court* had commanded the chapter of York immediately to put in execution.

He sent his learned and useful "*Discourse on the three Hours of Prayers*," to the press in the beginning of November in this year.

Mr. Thornton, having too-much volatility of mind to fix at his rectory of Thornton, and

too-

too-much conscience to keep it without resistance, prevailed on the precentor, though not without great grief, as he informs us, for the occasion of it, to present one Mr. Parsons, a particular friend of his, to that desirable piece of preferment.

In order to convey some little idea of the spirit of popish converters at the period of time at which we are now arrived, the precentor gives us the following anecdote :

“As some boys,” says he, “were playing near the mass-house, over against the minster at York, they were first abused by the popish priests, and then, after calling in the Irish soldiers, several of them were beat and wounded, and one of them almost killed.”

Though we cannot avoid regretting such violent proceedings as are mentioned above, yet we need not be surprized at them if we consider the arbitrary and cruel principles of the Papists, and that at this time they were protected in all their enormities by a popish King being seated on the throne. The impolitic violence of the Roman-catholics, however, as it could not fail to disgust those whom it was their wish to convert, so, under Providence, it completely de-

S

seated

CHAP. feated its own design, and in the end was the
X. means of finally emancipating these kingdoms
from a religion which was so justly detested.

1688. This year is distinguished in the annals of history by the great and memorable revolution, which will be cherished in the remembrance and affection of Englishmen to the end of time. King James urged on to his destruction by his popish advisers, proceeded so rapidly from one degree of oppression to another, that his protestant subjects would no longer tamely submit to see their *religion* and *liberty* overturned and destroyed. Though he had last year published "*A Declaration for Liberty of Conscience*" to all his subjects, and had proceeded to fill up all the vacant offices with *Roman-Catholics* devoted to his interests, he did not rest contented with this step, but published a second "*Declaration, &c.*" in the spring of this year, and by an order in council, enjoined the bishops to cause it to be distributed in their respective dioceses, and to be read in all churches and chapels on certain days particularly specified in that order. The bishops who happened to be in London, on the receipt of this order, met together at the archbishop's palace at Lambeth,
to

to consult what was best to be done on this critical occasion. The present was perhaps the most nice and delicate question that had ever been agitated. If they complied with the order of the supreme head of the Church of England, which commanded the "*Declaration, &c.*" to be read in the churches of their several dioceses, they became, by such an act of obedience, principal parties in betraying the *protestant religion*, which they were sworn to protect : if, on the other hand, they refused to obey it, in all probability they would draw down the severest pains and penalties both on themselves and their religion. The final result of their deliberations was such as might naturally be expected from pious and conscientious men : they determined to encounter any inconvenience, and submit to every hardship which merely affected their own persons, rather than give their countenance to this illegal and unjust proceeding of the King ; and they piously besought the supreme disposer of all events, to take the protestant religion under his immediate care and protection. In pursuance of this resolution, Dr. Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, and six bishops, on the

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CHAP. 18th of May, drew up a petition to the King,
X. in which they besought his majesty not to insist on their distributing the said "*Declaration*," and causing it to be read, for reasons which they set forth in that petition. The consequence of this conduct was, the petitioning bishops were sent to the Tower. This firmness of their lordships was highly acceptable to the protestant part of the kingdom, while it rendered the King's conduct still more odious in their eyes.

The precentor having so often and so greatly distinguished himself as the firm friend of protestantism, received an anonymous letter, from London, dated the 22d of May, which is so pertinent to the subject now under our consideration, it is here inserted.

"Sir,

"I suppose that every man who is concerned either in distributing or reading his majesty's "*Declaration, &c.*" would be willing to know what is done above: you may therefore please to take this short account from a stranger.— That eight bishops, who are now in town, have resolved *upon conscientious accounts*, not
to

to distribute the said "*Declaration, &c.*" and several others, though not personally present here, are like-minded. That six of these, viz. the Bishops of St. Asaph, Ely, Chichester, Bath and Wells, Bristol, and Peterborough, upon Friday night last, presented a petition to the King, signed by themselves and the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, that he would not insist upon the distributing and reading of it. That the Bishop of Gloucester who came to town last night, heartily concurreth, though he came not in time to be present at the delivery of the petition. That in the cities of London and Westminster, and the borough of Southwark, not above seven or eight read the "*Declaration, &c.*" last Sunday, and scarcely one or other of those of any consideration; and in some of their congregations a great part of the people, and in one of them *all* but two or three went out.

Sir, you may make what use you please of this, but I assure you it is well meant, and cometh from

A loyal subject,
And a true son of the church."

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Thus were matters conducted in the province of Canterbury with respect to the King's *Declaration*, and it did not meet with less opposition in the province of York.

The see of York had been kept vacant since the death of the last archbishop, that, at a convenient opportunity, James might introduce an adherent of his own religion. The Dean of York was entirely devoted to his interest, but this was not the case as to the other dignitaries of that church, for the dean, as we have seen above, was the only individual that subscribed the "*Address of thanks to the King*," for his *Declaration*, in the preceding year.

In this disposition of things, the precentor was naturally looked up to by the protestant party in York, at this trying juncture.

Coming from his residence at East-Newton, to York to preach in his course, he found many of the neighbouring clergy assembled in the city, to consult together about reading the King's "*Declaration*." The dean declining to give his opinion, the precentor was applied to, and appointed a meeting at his own house in York that very evening. Dr. Watkinson, chancellor of York, Dr. Covel, Dr. Burton, and

and many others, accordingly met at the time and place appointed. CHAP.
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“By a singular providence,” says he, “a special messenger arrived at this critical moment from London, who brought five hundred printed papers directed to me, which contained reasons against reading the *Declaration*, one of which we read, and it satisfied all the company: so we all refused to read it, and sent out the papers all over the diocese, and so ordered it, that few read it here.”

On the 9th of June, in this year, his friend Dr. George Hickes wrote a letter to him, principally on the above subject; and the following passage occurs in it:

“In the neighbouring dioceses of Oxford, Litchfield, and Hereford, where the *Declarations* were distributed, I cannot hear of above four or five ministers in each diocese that read them. *Not one was read in Oxford town or university*, but *one* in Hereford town, and the people went *all* out of the church. I should be glad to hear how the *Declaration* fared in your diocese, and the *bishopric of Durham*, where the news-writers tell us, it was “*zealously recommended.*”

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“ I hope,” continues the dean, “ the Roman-catholics will not be too-severe upon us, if they consider how their clergy would have received such a *Declaration* in countries where their religion is established; and what they would have done here, if they had been commanded to read the *Thirty-nine Articles*, or the *Act of Uniformity*, to their people. Nay, as to the *Declaration* I am persuaded that neither the pope, nor any popish counsell, nor the college of Sorbonne would give it under their hands, that an *unbounded toleration* is agreeable to the doctrine of unity in the gospel, the writings of the fathers, or the constitution of the Catholic Church.”

Sir Walter Vavasor, and Mr. Middleton, put the *three questions* about the choice of members of parliament to the precentor on the 24th of August, in their capacity of justices of the peace; and he answering them honestly and boldly, according to the dictates of his conscience, was immediately struck out of the commission of the peace. The rest of the prebends following his example, met with similar treatment.

In the precentor's memorandum book, on the page opposite that on which are the *an-*
swers

swers to these *three famous questions* an CHAP.
elegant copy of verses is written so descriptive X.
of these times, that, if they had been found
any where else, they would have shewn their
destination. In the same book, a few pages
farther, is another *severe satyric copy of verses*
apparently on the same subject. The person
on whom the above verses were written, was
one who had been a sequestrator in the civil
wars, and was, at this time, a chairman of a
grand committee in parliament. These will
all be given in the appendix.

Notwithstanding his being threatened by the
Dean of York, he refused to attend a chapter
held the 25th of August for the purpose of
suspending the Rev. Mr. Lawson ; the *High-*
Commission-Court having sent an order to the
chapter of York to that effect.

Thinking that himself would in all proba-
bility very soon be in Mr. Lawson's situation,
he began to repair his house at Useburne to
receive his wife and family on that event taking
place.

King James having given a promise of a *free*
parliament, though nothing could be farther
from his thoughts than to fulfil it, the precen-
tor

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tor advised with his friend Sir John Kay on this subject, and they attended a meeting of the clergy, gentry, and freeholders, which had collected together to the amount of a thousand and upwards in consequence of the King's promise ; but no writ coming down, they drew up "*A petition to his majesty for a free parliament,*" which was signed at the precentor's house.

About this time James sent a *silver crozier* to York, and a *congè d'elire*, with a recommendation of Dr. Smith, a popish priest ; but rather than have any concern in such an election, the precentor determined to accept the invitation formerly given him by the Princess of Orange to take refuge with her.

The Earls of Danby, and Devonshire, coming to York in the month of October, he paid his respects to them, but his lady being indisposed he was obliged to go into the country the beginning of November.

His lady was delivered of a son on the 26th of November, who, on the 4th of December following was christened at Stonegrave church by his friend the Rev. Charles Man, and called *Thomas* : his sponsors were the Earl of Danby, Thomas York, of Richmond, in Yorkshire, esq;

esq; and Mrs. Mary Wandesford, sister to
Mrs. Thornton.

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The chapter of York had been so far from complying with James's wish of chusing Dr. Smith, that, on the contrary, they elected Dr. Thomas Lamplugh, Bishop of Exeter, in direct opposition to it. The precentor was not present on this occasion, being in the country, as mentioned above, but his manner of speaking of it leaves no room to doubt he heartily concurred therein.

The Earl of Devonshire, at the head of a great number of Derbyshire gentlemen, had declared for *a free parliament*, the Earl of Danby continued at York to promote the same object, and disarmed and turned out all the Papists who attempted to oppose or intimidate the petitioners.

Though the precentor's unavoidable absence in the country, prevented him from joining the Earl of Danby and his party when they seized upon the city of York, yet he so arranged his affairs as to return to that place before his lordship left it, to thank him in person for the distinguished honour he had lately conferred upon his family.

The

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The arbitrary proceedings of James, and his oppression of the protestant religion and its professors, having caused him to be deserted by every one, but a few of his popish adherents, whose counsels had brought him into this dilemma, and even his very children having forsaken him, the Prince of Orange also having been sent for some time before, and now taking possession of Whitehall; on the 23d of December, the King privately withdrew into France, accompanied only by a few attendants, and the prince immediately called *a free parliament* to consult on the affairs of the kingdom.

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From the end of the year 1688, to his being installed Dean of Durham.

JAMES II. having thus *abdicated the throne*, the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons in parliament assembled, declared the throne *vacant* by such *abdication*. On the 13th day of February, the Marquis of Halifax, speaker of the house of lords, made a solemn offer of the crown of Great Britain to the Prince and Princess of Orange, in the name of the two houses of lords and commons; and their highnesses accepting the same, were immediately proclaimed King and Queen of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, with the unanimous approbation of all good men.

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1689.

The writ for proclaiming King William and Queen Mary, arriving at York on the night of Saturday the 17th of February, the city was in so great a bustle during the next day, that there was no sermon at the cathedral in the forenoon, but in the afternoon the precentor, who was on his way to London, and had only

CHAP. only notice of preaching that very morning, de-
XI. livered a discourse to a very crouded audience,
taking his text from Rom. xvi. 17.

Arriving in London a few days after this, he endeavoured, though without success, to persuade his old friends the Bishops of Chichester and Peterborough, to take the oaths to the new government. On the 1st day of March, he was introduced to the Queen, on her return from chapel, by the Princess of Denmark, to whom he had been presented the day before: he was admitted to the honour of kissing her majesty's hand, who received him very graciously.

It is natural to suppose that a divine of so great reputation as the precentor, would be consulted by many of his brethren on the lawfulness of complying with the new government. Of this fact several testimonies are yet extant. The Rev. William Walker addressed a letter to him on the 26th of February to the following effect:

“ I hope by the time this reaches your hands, you may be enabled to give better reasons, than any I have yet met with, for the methods that have been taken in relation to
the

the *grand affair*, which has lately been tran-
sacted, and of which if you please to impart your
sentiments to me at your leisure, you will do a
singular act of charity not only to myself, but to
a great many of my neighbouring brethren who
are under great trouble and perplexity, which
has occasioned their non-compliance with some
late orders, and would gladly act *safely* and
honestly. I desire also," continues Mr. W.
"the resolution of this question, whether it be
consistent with a good conscience, to use the
church prayers for a King whom it does not
look upon to be soe? This is a great question,
in the solution whereof a great many to my
knowledge are concerned, and therefore I most
earnestly desire, if your occasions will permit,
you will think very seriously of it, and com-
municate your judgement upon it."

The above is the substance of Mr. Walker's
letter, and about the same time the Rev.
Martin Pinchbeck, vicar of Butterwick, in
Lincolnshire, addressed a letter to him, in
which he not only requests his sentiments of
the revolution in general, but proposes *five*
questions to him formally on that subject: the
same gentleman wrote a second letter full of
gratitude

CHAP. XI. gratitude for the answer which had been given him, and desiring further information. What answer he gave to these letters does not appear, but he drew up an answer afterwards to these *five questions*, not in the form of a letter, and with more asperity than it is natural to suppose his answer to Mr. Pinchbeck's queries, which that gentleman so thankfully acknowledged, was written. These *queries* he turned into objections, and altered the order of them, converting them into a "*Vindication of the Protestants of England who joined with the Prince of Orange.*"

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Johnson, of Sydney-College, Cambridge, being now also master of that society, the intimate friend and indeed *relation* of the precentor, addressed a letter to him in the beginning of this year, in which he says, "the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had lately been elected chancellor of the university of Cambridge, had, upon the revolution, resigned that place, and desired the university to choose another. That at a meeting of the heads several were proposed, and amongst others, *he* had proposed the Earl of Danby, the rather because he was *the precentor's friend*,
and

and a person *very well qualified* for that dignity.” CHAP.
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The doctor desires his correspondent to enquire of his lordship, if he would accept the place on his being elected, it being unusual for the university to be denied when the choice is made.

The precentor addressed a letter on this occasion to the earl, who by his answer declined the acceptance of the chancellorship, and hereupon the Duke of Somerset was elected.

During his stay in London he put to the press, his first part of “*Roman Forgeries, during the three first Centuries*,” which, however, was not made public till the michaelmas following.

He returned home from London by the way of Cambridge, and arrived at length after a very bad journey, which threw him into an illness, the effects of which hung about him for a considerable time.

About this time he published two pamphlets in defence of the government, one called “*A modest Vindication, &c.*” as mentioned above; the other “*An Apology for the Oath of Allegiance* :” but he thought proper to conceal his name, “being satisfied,” as he himself says,
T “with

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XI.

“with the hope of uniting all the churches friends.” His modesty on this, as well as former occasions, is singularly deserving of praise.

The Presbyterians hoping to gain their point by the dissent of some great churchmen, about this time printed two books, written by the learned Mr. David Clarkson, deceased, who had been tutor to Archbishop Tillotson. One of those books “*Against Diocesan Episcopacy*,” was sent to Dr. Henry Maurice, chaplain to Archbishop Sancroft, who answered it in his “*Defence of Diocesan Episcopacy*,” printed soon after this time : the other book of Mr. Clarkson “*Against Liturgies*,” was sent to the precentor, who, in the beginning of July, began his reply to it, in his “*History of Liturgies*.”

He was restored by King William to the office of *justice of the peace*, after a year’s suspension, and on the 19th of July took the necessary oaths : on the 21st of the same month, he preached the assize sermon in York cathedral, before the judges *Powel* and *Ventris*, taking his text from Matt. vi. 33.

About this time he received a letter from his friend Alderman Thompson, a member of parliament, which relates the discontents and jealousies

jealousies which at that time prevailed in the kingdom. He particularly observes, that the clergy were dissatisfied with the "*Act of Toleration*," as thinking it prejudicial to the interest of the protestant religion: he adds, "they had that day gone through the business of settling who were to be *excluded* from the general pardon, that their names would shortly be made public, and that he hoped it would give *general satisfaction*." He assures his correspondent, that "as far as he is able to judge, there is no other design in this step, but to preserve and maintain *the Church of England*, in which he hopes he shall live and die."

The precentor, with his brethren the dean and chapter of York, on the 17th of September met the new archbishop at Tadcaster, and his grace was conducted to the throne *processionalitèr*.

Soon after this he dedicated to the new Archbishop of York the first volume, or first and second parts of his *Roman Forgeries*, "which," says he, "I am obliged to lay at your grace's feet, as the first thing I have made public since your grace's *happy advancement* to the government of this church."

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XI.

In the beginning of this dedication he observes, that “many clergymen of the Church of England, have no opportunity of gaining a knowledge of ecclesiastical antiquity, except from Roman editions of councils and modern historians of that church.” He then proceeds to observe, “that these writers have *suppressed* some genuine remains of antiquity, *falsified* and *altered more*, and *added* so much, that nearly three parts in four both of Baronius and the councils, are *forgeries*, *legends*, and *sophistic excuses for popery*.” He next remarks, that “an accurate collection of what is true in the primitive history of the church would be a noble work, but fit only for a select body of scholars, and that the design of this work is to distinguish such materials, which he has been advised to digest in this manner; and that a separation of the *corrupt* from the *genuine* pieces, would be a means not only to secure Protestants, but to convert Papists.”

In the introduction to this work he observes, that “a learned and ingenious gentleman in a tract, published at London, A. D. 1673, intitled *Roman Forgeries*, had begun this useful task, but that he did not follow the order of
time,

time, did not go much beyond the second Ni- CHAP.
cene council, and omitted many plain in- XI.
stances ; so that upon the death of that gen-
tleman, he resolved *not* to begin where he had
left off, but to go through every century from
the first till the conclusion of the fourth.”—

According to this plan, the three chapters of
his first part are destined to the examination
of the three first centuries, each one, and the
second part to a like examination of the
fourth ; and an appendix is added, concerning
the errors of Baronius in his annals.

The uses of this work he enumerates to be,

I. Giving students in ecclesiastical history
a view *at once* of the forgeries.

II. Giving our controvertists at Rome a
list of what is *lawful evidence* against them.

III. Giving an *antidote* against books so full
of infection as those lately written for the Ro-
mish cause.

To the objection, that this argument has
been handled by Junius, Rivet, Daillè, Perkins,
Cooke, James, and the author of the “*His-
torical Examination of the Authority of general
Councils*,” London, 1688, he replies, that “the
six first are chiefly concerned in tracts of par-

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particular fathers, and make few remarks on councils; and that the seventh omits the smaller councils; and that in his work many instances are to be found, which have not been taken notice of by any of the above-mentioned authors."

To the objection, that many modern Papists confess these forgeries, and therefore they need not be pressed, he answers excellently—"That *they retain the false doctrines built upon them*, and therefore they should be insisted on and exposed; just as it is not sufficient for a man who has gained an estate by suborning witnesses, or bribing a jury, to confess his baseness, unless he determines likewise to restore his ill-gotten goods."

About the month of September he was engaged in a controversy with one C. I. about baptism by laics, which was attended with the usual success of such rencountres, neither party being willing to give up his opinion to his antagonist.

His old friend Dr. Lake Bishop of Chichester, falsely imagining he was the author of a pamphlet in defence of the new government, intitled "*A Letter to a Bishop, &c.*" sent a
long

long letter to him on the contents of that publication ; but he disclaimed the book, yet confuted the arguments of the bishop. His lordship sent a second very long letter on the same subject, to which Dr. Comber without delay wrote a minute reply, but, in a short time, the bishop's death put an end to the controversy.

The pains which he had formerly taken, though without effect, to prevail on the bishop to comply with the new government, might be one reason why his lordship thought him the author of the above-mentioned "*Letter, &c.*" and the circumstance of its being published by his bookseller Mr. Clavell, might further contribute to the mistake, and the bishop says in one of his letters on this subject, that its being *extremely well written* ("written with so fine a pen,") was one reason which induced him to attribute it to our author.

On the 16th of October he was chosen procurator for the chapter of York, where the convocation was held on the 19th of October and again on the 7th of November, and so on by adjournment until it was dissolved.

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He finished the *first* part of the “*History of Liturgies*,” against Mr. Clarkson, on the 13th of October, having been occupied about it only four months, and he commenced the *latter* part the beginning of November, which he completed in the like space of four months, viz. on the 3d of April next year.

His eldest daughter, though not yet quite nine years old, was thought sufficiently qualified to be confirmed, which she accordingly was on the 27th of November by the Archbishop of York, in the cathedral church of that province. A striking instance this of the benefits of early impressing religious instruction on an ingenuous mind.

The latter end of November his old and learned friend the Rev. William Mompeffon wrote a long letter to him, in which he gave him some account of the celebrated convocation held in London at this time. He says, “their first step was, he fears *no good one*, in choosing *Dr. Jane* prolocutor, instead of the *Dean of Saint Pauls**.” He tells him, “that

* Dr. John Tillotson soon after made Archbishop of Canterbury.

he was informed by one of the commissioners that, on the next Monday, the question was to be put, whether, or no, *Apocryphal* lessons should be changed for *Canonical*, and on the determination of this, it was generally thought the fate of all the proposed alterations in the liturgy would depend." He says, "few alterations were made in the *daily offices*, but there was an exposition of the *damnatory clauses* in the *Athanasian creed*; that ministers who declare before the ordinary, that they think the use of the *cross* and *surplice* unlawful, shall be indulged; and parishioners who dislike the use of the cross may carry their children to be baptized by those who will omit it." He adds, "that the collects were to be suited to the scriptures they precede, and the office for the sick much altered."

It does not appear by any papers extant at this day, what Dr. Comber thought of the proposed alterations. He has, however, written learnedly to prove, that the *Athanasian creed* was composed by him whose name it bears; who, being cast out of his bishopric of Alexandria by the Arians, and accused of heresy to the Emperor, composed it to purge himself

CHAP. himself from that calumny ; and presented it
 XI. to Julius Bishop of Rome about the year of
 our Lord 340. He remarks, that “ if any one
 scruples the positive denying of salvation to
 those who do not believe the articles therein
 contained, they should recollect, that those
 who hold any of the *fundamental heresies*
 therein condemned, are also condemned in the
 sacred scripture, 1 John ii. 24, 25. and the
 doctrines are called *damnable heresies*, 2 Pet.
 ii. 1.”

In another letter of the date of the 3d of
 December, Mr. Mompeffon says, “ the con-
 vocation men seem stiff and obstinate : some
 say they will part with nothing, not so much
 as *Bel* and *the Dragon* ; though others say, they
 know not why they should have *bellum pro
 bello*.” By the free manner in which Mr. M.
 wrote, one would imagine he knew that his
 correspondent would not dislike *reasonable con-
 cessions* : and indeed he has declared, that he
 thought ceremonies might be altered for
peace-sake. The conclusion of these propo-
 sals for alterations every body knows.

1690. The precentor conducted himself so much
 to the satisfaction of all parties, that he was
 unanimously

unanimously chosen to the office of procurator to the convocation which was opened by the Archbishop of York the 27th of March in this year. CHAP.
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The cathedral organ being in great decay, he wrote a letter to the Bishop of London, wherein he requests his lordship's concurrence and advice about petitioning the King for a uselefs organ in Whitehall, but this not taking effect, he represented the state of the old organ to the Archbishop of York, and requested his grace to present a new one to the chapter. The archbishop declined this, as he had already, in the short time since he had been advanced to that see, paved the choir with handsome marble, set up new rails, and given hangings to the altar. Desirous, however, to promote the undertaking, his grace offered to be at half the expence, if the precentor would raise the other. He accordingly set himself vigorously to promote a subscription, and, within six months, the clergy and gentry in the city and neighbourhood subscribed the sum of *two hundred pounds*, including the sum of *ten pounds* which he himself contributed. He made hereupon an agreement with Mr. Smith

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Smith to build the new organ for *four hundred pounds*, which engagement was fulfilled within a twelvemonth. The archbishop, besides the *two hundred pounds* which he subscribed, left orders in his will, that his executor should pay for the fitting and casing of it, and for painting the same.

About this time he prevailed upon his uncle-in-law, the Rev. John Denton, to take episcopal orders from Dr. Thomas Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln. This gentleman, who has been frequently mentioned in these memoirs, was admitted sizar of Clare-Hall, Cambridge, the 4th day of May, 1646, and was pupil to Mr. David Clarkson, fellow of that society, whose writings the precentor was at this time employed in answering. During his residence at Clare-Hall, he contracted an intimate friendship with Archbishop Tillotson and was very serviceable to him in a severe illness, which attacked him whilst at college, and always kept up a correspondence with him as long as he (the archbishop) lived. He had the opportunity of doing a singular piece of service to his grace, when a young man, in rescuing his character from aspersions which had been

been cast on it; in which generous act he was CHAP.
aided by two fellows of that college, as is re- XI.
lated at large in the archbishop's life by Dr.
Thomas Birch. Mr. Denton married to his first
wife, a sister of the late Mr. Thornton of East-
Newton. He had been presented to the rectory
of Oswaldkirk in Yorkshire, (where it is said
Archbishop Tillotson preached his first sermon,)
but was ejected from that living in the year
1662, by the act of uniformity. "He was," as
the precentor, who know him extremely well,
informs us, "a learned, quiet, and pious man;
and notwithstanding his deprivation, always
conducted himself very peaceably; and, after
his ordination, continued a good conformist
to the end of his life." By the precentor's
interest he afterwards obtained the living of
Stonegrave, as will be shewn hereafter, and a
prebend in the church of York, both which
he held till his death the 4th of January, 1708,
in the 83d year of his age. He was buried
in the church of Stonegrave, and was suc-
ceeded in that living by his son the Rev.
Robert Denton, who was educated at Catha-
rine-Hall, in Cambridge, and enjoyed it many
years.

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CHAP.
XI.

The Archbishop of York visiting the chapter on the 19th of August, in the absence of the dean, the precentor read the protestation that his grace should visit according to the form of a composition, to which he readily assented.

At the request of the high-sheriff, he preached the assize sermon before the judges *Dolben* and *Powell*, on Psalm lxxxiv. 10.

He informs us, that “about this time, one Mr. S. Bold, a minister of the isle of Purbeck, who, in King James’s time, had joined with papists and fanatics, in regulating corporations, but had subscribed the Book of Common-Prayer, and now held two livings, wrote a *frivolous answer* to his book of liturgies, to which he replied in three or four sheets, and then slighted him.” An excellent example this for all controvertists!

A letter is yet extant from Dr. Beveridge, written in the beginning of this year, in which the doctor thanks him for the perusal of his *reply*, which he thinks a very sufficient answer to the *cavils* of which S. Bold’s book is, in his judgment, composed; and rejoices that such an adversary has prevailed on him to confirm his work

work for the good of the church, and he gives his opinion about the best manner of printing it. Mr. Clavell printed it in 1691, with the title, “*The Examiner examined; being a Vindication of the History of Liturgies, by T. C. D. D.*” Throughout the whole, containing sixty-six pages in quarto, he has great *advantage* over his adversary.

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The following may be taken as a specimen : “ The examiner first adds *no* to my words, and then cites them thus, “ liturgies are *no* other words, &c.” and then insinuates they are *nonsense*, and an *odd expression* to fall from a learned doctor : but I am sure it is an *odd trick* of a *non-conforming-conformist* to put *no* into the midst of a sentence. The adding *no* to scripture itself may make it *nonsense* or *blasphemy* ; and if I should add it to his preface, and say “ He is *no* conformist, he useth *not* the liturgy ; some may think I had *not* done him much wrong, though he *no doubt* had resented it.” Again, on Mr. Bold’s interpreting a sentence of *Maldonet* to signify, that “ we are not absolutely bound to use the very words of the *Lord’s Prayer* at any time,” he justly remarks, that this shews “ Mr. B. did not know that this author was a *Jesuit* and
a rigid

CHAP. a rigid *Papist*, bound by the rules of his church
 XI. and order to say so many pater-nosters every
 day." Again he remarks, that "when Messrs. *Clarkson* and *Bold* explain *praying by the Spirit* to mean "inventing new words," they exclude the *people* from ever praying by the Spirit at all." It is proper to remark, that throughout the whole of this reply, there is much sprightliness and true wit, which greatly relieves the reader in the perusal of a very dry subject.

A public fast having been appointed on the 18th of June in this year, to implore the divine blessing on the preparations by sea and land, and for the preservation of his majesty, King William, who had determined to hazard a campaign in Ireland against James, though supported by all the *Papists* in that kingdom; *a public thanksgiving* was appointed on the 19th of October for his majesty's success in that campaign. On this occasion the precentor composed an elegant copy of "*Verses on the Campaign in Ireland*," which do great honour both to his principles and abilities.

Amongst the precentor's papers we find a memorandum, "that an unknown person sent a noble crimson velvet cloth with rich embroidery

broidery and gold fringe to adorn the altar of the cathedral." He prays, "that God may reward this alms, done in *secret*, very *openly* ;" and observes, "it was a very seasonable and liberal gift."

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The word *altar*, which occurs in the above mentioned memorandum, has frequently been most grossly abused by artful and interested Papists, to serve the purposes of popish superstition, though great pains has been taken by divines of the reformed church to sanctify it to the use of Protestants. The best reason, perhaps, which can be given for its being still retained, is that which our author hath given on another occasion, viz. "To keep up the allusion of *Christian service* to that of the Jews."

Sir Anthony Mayn, a trustee of the Lady Lumley's charity, having been bribed by a coachman to procure him a share of that charity, the precentor thought himself obliged to sue them, and several men of Sinnington, their associates in the fraud. This suit, depending three or four years, wasted above *forty pounds*, which had been saved out of the improved rents, and which had been designed for repairs

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CHAP. and other uses. The court of chancery upon
 XI. a full hearing of the cause, compelled the intruders to quit the receipts, and Sir Anthony his trust, which he had so shamefully betrayed. As Dr. Comber was about to leave the country, he got a decree to settle those charities in the hands of six or seven of the neighbouring gentry, who were likely to take care of them for the time to come.

1691. His majesty King William having returned from Holland on the 13th of April, in this year, where he had been to attend the congress, held at the Hague, to concert measures for preserving the liberty of Europe against France; as he designed to make only a short stay in England, he determined to fill up the vacant preferments of the *non-juring* bishops, and other dignities, which his majesty thought had been too-long deferred already.

The first step which the King took was to nominate Dr. John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury, which was accordingly done in council on the 23d of April, and he was consecrated the last day of May following. Most writers agree that never was any dignity bestowed more deservedly, never were the duties
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of that high and arduous station discharged with greater honour to the party himself, or with more advantage to the church than in the instance now before us. CHAP.
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Dr. Tillotson was exalted to the see of Canterbury on the deprivation of Archbishop Sancroft, who refused to take the oaths to the new government. It must be acknowledged by Dr. Sancroft's greatest enemies, that he acted on this occasion from principle, and on a thorough conviction that it was not lawful to acknowledge any person as King during the life of James II. It was so manifestly against his interest, that a firm persuasion of its being his duty, could alone have induced him to make so great a sacrifice. It is also clear, that like many of his *non-juring* brethren, he was not impelled to this conduct by any regard for the popish cause, since he had on all occasions proved himself zealous for the protestant interest; and was in fact the first projector of the scheme of a *comprehension* of all the dissenting Protestants, the more firmly to unite them together, and thereby enable them to withstand the progress of popery.

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The new archbishop was in high and just estimation with the King, and most of the considerable vacant preferments were filled up by his advice and recommendation. The account we have of the part his grace had in the precentor's promotion to the deanry of Durham, is related by Dr. Birch in the archbishop's life, in these words :

“ His grace was likewise instrumental in procuring the deanry of Durham for Dr. Thomas Comber, with whom he had long lived in great friendship, and for whose learning and piety he had an high esteem. That deanry being vacant in 1691, by the refusal of Dr. Dennis Grenville, younger brother of John the first Earl of Bath, to take the oaths, the King was consulting with some of the leading men at court to whom it should be given. The Marquis of Carmarthen, afterwards Duke of Leeds, and the archbishop, were in the presence chamber, when the Earl of Fauconberg, who had been reduced from a wavering state to a firm adherence to protestantism by the private discourse and writings of Dr. Comber, especially his “ *Advice to the Roman-*

Roman-Catholics," proposed that divine to them as a proper person for that preferment. Whereupon the archbishop, being as much influenced by his regard for the doctor, as the marquis was connected with him by family, they immediately approved of Lord Fauconberg's proposal, and Dr. Comber being recommended to his majesty was collated to the deanry*." CHAP.
XI.

The above account is equally honourable to the precentor who received this preferment, and to those distinguished personages who so warmly interested themselves in procuring it for him: it shewed also in a very striking manner how greatly he was esteemed by the archbishop, and how mindful Lord Fauconberg was of the solemn promise he had made of being a friend to him whenever a fit opportunity presented itself.

Though Dr. Birch has mentioned in a note, that the above account is extracted from a manuscript life of Dr. Comber written by himself, he must undoubtedly mean *the fact* only of his being promoted by the archbishop's in-

* See Dr. Birch's Life of Archbishop Tillotson, 8vo. 1752, page 393.

CHAP. XI. { tereft, without *intending* the circumstances which accompanied it, and which he muft have collected from another fource. That Dr. Comber was ignorant of the above proceedings in his favour, the following anecdote feems to be a convincing proof.

He informs us, that “having prepared to go to London on the 27th of April, *an unexpected letter* arrived on the 25th instant from the Marquis of Carmarthen, informing him that the King had given him *a great preferment*, upon his and the archbifhop’s recommendation,” but he adds, “he did not *know certainly* that it was the deanry of Durham till his arrival in London.” The marquis’s letter above alluded to is yet extant, and the information it contains is thus expreffed : “It will not be long before you hear of a *very confiderable* and *very profitable preferment* in the church, to which you will be certainly promoted ; but I am not yet at liberty *to let you know the particulars*, only I am glad I have been fo fucceffful in my endeavours for you. It is fit to let you know the *Deane of Paul’s** has been your very good friend in this matter, but you

* Archbishop Tillotfon.

muft

must not take notice of it till you hear from CHAP.
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other hands as well as mine. I am informed," }
continues the marquis, "that the Princess*
hath been *much your friend*, and I am willing
you should make all your acknowledgements
to her highness only, because, it is not fit *that*
the favours of princes should be diminished.

"I have also," adds he, "procured a living
in Northamptonshire for my cosin Thornton
of 160l. per annum, with which he must con-
tent himself for the present till a better can be
had, in which I will always be ready to serve
him; and perhaps something which you must
quit (being amply provided for otherwise) may
be proper for him, which you will do well to
let me know speedily."

On his arrival in London he was informed
that his old friend Dr. Grenville, had not only
refused to take the oath to King William and
Queen Mary, but was even gone over to James;
in consequence of which conduct, he was de-
prived of the deanry of Durham, and him-
self was appointed to succeed him. In his
account of this transaction, he adds, "af-

* The Princess Anne of Denmark, afterwards Queen of Great Britain.

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ter speaking with the archbishop and my Lord Nottingham, I did *at last* accept it." This modesty and inambition of Dr. Comber, justifies, as far as he was concerned, the character which the learned and candid translator and continuator of Rapin's History of England gives of the clergy preferred at this juncture.

It is certain his delaying to accept this preferment, proceeded not from such a motive as the compilers of the celebrated S. Johnson's life have given for his declining the acceptance *of it*, viz. "his hope of procuring an *English bishopric*." That Dr. Comber was totally devoid of this ambition we have a testimony under his own hand, where speaking of this preferment in a letter to his friend Mr. Lane, he says, "it is *better* than any bishopric in England for your friend, &c." and the Earl of Fauconberg in a letter on this subject says, "give me leave to congratulate with you, on the worthy choice the King has made of Dr. Comber to be Dean of Durham, which, if I mistake not, *will be as acceptable to him as a bishopric*."

The above expression of the good earl leaves no doubt that he both glanced at S. Johnson's declining the acceptance *of this same preferment*,

ment, and Dr. Comber's known modesty and
aversion to cumbrous honours.

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There is the greatest reason to conclude, that motives of delicacy and honour to his old friend Dr. Grenville, induced him to be *well-assured* that the doctor could no longer hold it, and that if he declined it, another would certainly have it, ere he would accept it.

The Marquis of Carmarthen introduced the new Dean of Durham to kiss the Queen's hand on the 3d day of May, and her majesty was graciously pleased to express great satisfaction in the King's choice, and pressed the dispatch of his seals ; so that he was instituted by the Bishop of Durham on the 9th day of May. Though he had not been requested to resign any preferment, otherwise than in the above general terms of the Marquis of Carmarthen's letter, yet he voluntarily resigned the living of Stonegrave in favour of the Rev. Mr. Denton, and *voluntarily* promised to resign his precentorship at Martinmas, though he had no house at Durham fit to receive him, on account of the deanry house being in utter ruin and decay, and had great arrears due to him from his preferment at York.

Arch-

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Archbishop Lamplugh dying the 5th of May, and a *congé d'elire* being dispatched on the 11th of May following for Dr. John Sharp, Dean of Canterbury, who had succeeded Dr. Tillotson in that preferment, on his promotion to the deanry of St. Paul's; Dr. Comber waited upon him with congratulations.

Dr. Sharp owed his exaltation to the see of York entirely to the friendship of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom he had always lived in habits of the strictest intimacy. The King it seems had taken offence at the doctor for declining several of the vacant bishoprics, on account of his having a particular esteem and friendship for the persons who had been deprived of them. The address of Archbishop Tillotson, not only removed the King's displeasure, but by his interest with his majesty, procured his friend the archbishopric of York, on the death of Archbishop Lamplugh.

The friendship of these two great men had been cemented by the interchange of mutual good offices. Dr. Sharp having been a long time chaplain to the Lord High Chancellor Heneage Finch, and entrusted by his lordship with the care of enquiring into the character
and

and qualifications of the divines who were candidates for preferment, had made use of his interest with the Lord Chancellor to procure the residentiaryship of St. Paul's for his friend Dr. Tillotson, who always carried this kind act in his mind, and now discharged his obligation in this noble manner. Dr. Sharp was promoted by the Lord Chancellor's interest to the deanry of Norwich, and while in that preferment, was one of the twenty divines in the commission appointed by King William, in A. D. 1689, to prepare matters for the consideration of the approaching convocation.

The late change in the see of York had necessarily delayed the acceptance of the resignation of the living of Stonegrave, so that he kept the title, with the approbation of the archbishop, and at Mr. Denton's request, but received no part of the emoluments of the living, from the time of his becoming Dean of Durham.

He arrived safe at York on the 8th of May, and Mrs. Thornton being there, he imparted to her the agreeable tidings of Mr. Thornton having got a living in Northamptonshire, by the Lord President's interest, at which, he expresses

CHAP. presses his hopes, that gentleman would reside,
XI. and be made happy.

He set off to Durham the beginning of June, and was installed on the 15th of the same month by Dr. Grey; on the 21st he read prayers and preached in the cathedral, and having viewed the deanry house, which he found in great decay, and settled his affairs, he returned, on the 24th instant, to his family at York. He began his last month of residence at York, on the 3d of August, intending when that was completed to return to Durham, where, in the mean time, the workmen were busily employed in repairing the deanry house.

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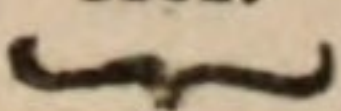
CHAP. XII.

From the time of his being installed Dean of Durham, to his procuring preferment for an indigent and deserving clergyman.

THE dean's family came to Durham about the middle of October, and he borrowed his friend Dr. Brevint's house, in which he resided for three quarters of a year, whilst the repairs of the deanry were going forward. His predecessor Dr. Grenville, frequently wrote to him from France, but in a very different style to that which he had formerly used; he considered Dr. Comber as his *steward*, and liable to a strict account for all the money he received in the capacity of Dean of Durham, whenever James, whose fortune he determined to follow, should be restored. It is beyond a doubt happy for these kingdoms, that this restoration never took place.

CHAP.
XII.
1694.

Mr. Thornton exchanged his living in Northamptonshire, for that of Bolden, in the bishopric of Durham, for the purpose of being near his brother-in-law, whom he accompanied
to

CHAP. to Durham: he was instituted on the 3d of
XII.  September, and inducted the 5th of the same month, and lived with the dean till the time of his (Mr. Thornton's) death, which happened not long afterwards.

The dean began his first residence at Durham the 21st day of October, and continued very strict in attending the duties of his new station.

About this time Bishop Burnet exasperated the Queen, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, against the dean, by unfounded and injurious reports, and amongst other things, by a story that he did not mean to resign his precentorship, which, in consequence of his offering to do, the bishop had obtained a promise of, for his countryman Dr. Fall. There are yet extant many of the dean's letters addressed to his different friends, to clear his character from this aspersions; in all of them he expresses himself in the warm and pathetic language of a feeling mind; and in one protests, "that his reputation is dearer to him than his life." At length his friends, the Marquis of Carmarthen, and the Archbishop of York, cleared his character from this calumny, and on the 19th of December

cember he resigned his precentorship before a notary-public, and more formally by the archbishop's desire, to his chancellor on the 19th of January following, never desiring a farthing of the profits since the preceding Martinmas. It is a certain fact that he had repeatedly refused the sum of *eighty pounds*, which had been offered him for the renewal of a life, which had been gone more than five years, because he thought it was less than ought to be given, and therefore an *ill precedent* : so that he left it open for his successor, who received *above an hundred pounds* for the renewal. His successor Dr. Fall, returned him thanks for this generous conduct in a letter yet extant, and in several others on the subject of his succeeding to the precentorship, treated him with the utmost respect. It does not appear that the Bishop of Sarum ever made any apology to him for his unjustifiable behaviour, though it is pretty evident that his conduct greatly required it. His lordship's treatment of the dean on the above occasion, may certainly be attributed in great measure, to the remembrance of the old misunderstanding which
had

CHAP. had subsisted betwixt them, and we may
 XII. say with Virgil, with very little alteration,

———“ *Manet altâ mente repôstum
 Judicium—spretæque injuria probis.*”

Bishop Burnet was undoubtedly a man of great and shining abilities; his writings alone will insure him a deathless fame; and at this distance of time when the heat of party has long since subsided, his real merits will not fail to be justly appreciated by impartial posterity: Men of the first rate abilities, can however no more plead an exemption from the common failings of humanity, and especially from passion and prejudice than others; and these shades in their character tend to bring them nearer to the level of ordinary men: perfection was never intended to be the lot of frail humanity.

In the midst of such a multiplicity of business as the dean had lately been engaged in, he does not however seem to have been forgetful of the muses. In a pocket book, containing an account of the transactions of this and the two following years, two copies of verses are found of singular beauty, one of them is

“ *In*

“*In Praise of Female Modesty*,” the other, “*In Praise of King William*.”

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XII.

1692.

Hitherto Dr. Comber hath appeared in the most dangerous times, and when popery carried every thing before it, as the undaunted and zealous champion of the *Protestant religion*: regardless of his own interest, or even safety, he seems to have been animated only by the *noble and disinterested* principle, that “private advantage should give way to the public good.” Having so repeatedly interested himself for the affairs of the *church*, he is about to appear an equally warm friend to the *state*, both in his writings and actions, thus evincing, that *he who is conscientious in discharging his duty to his God, may naturally be expected to be also faithful and loyal to his King*.

He addressed a letter to the Marquis of Carmarthen, who was at this time lord president of the council, on the subject of the *French invasion*, projected about this time in favour of the abjured King James. This letter displays his *loyalty* and *gratitude* in so striking a light, that any representation of it, besides the very words in which the copy in his own hand-writing is conceived, would be an injustice to his memory.

X

“My

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“ My Lord !

“ By their majesties’ favour and your lordship’s care, my circumstances are such as to be above needing the favour, or dreading the anger of my neighbours, since I have but one thing to wish as to temporalls, and that is the peace and prosperity of their majesty’s government, to which duty, as well as gratitude, obliges me to contribute as far as I am able. I always suspected and now too-apparently discover, this country to contain many malcontents. I am daily informed, by such as I can trust, that the late news of a descent from France hath been received and told by many, not only with confidence but satisfaction, and upon that account divers appear bold and merry, their discourses being very daring, and their actions insolent. The Papists also are noted to ride of late armed and well mounted, and tis feared some *whom the government trusts with power connive at all this*. Those who complain, are so sensible of the danger that may ensue, if there should be any invasion in Scotland or these parts, that their zeal for the public good makes them willing to *instance* in some of the principall persons : wherefore I thought it my duty privately to acquaint your lord-

lordship, who know what probability there is of a French descent upon us, and what danger may arise from the practices and connivances complained of. If there be little danger to be feared from either, none will more willingly avoyd the ungratefull office of informing [than myself]; but if there be a great and just occasion to serve the public, *I and my friends will call nothing grievous that may contribute to so good an end.* It is therefore in your lordship's breast, whether you please to give any further directions in this matter or no: but if your lordship think a list of particulars may be necessary, I can with speed and secrecy get it from the best hands. I beg my most humble duty and faithfull service may be presented to her majesty, whom God long preserve, with all those *faithfull friends to the government and to the Church of England* that are now at the helm, who have the most hearty prayers of, my lord,

Your lordship's most obedient and
 May 3d, most affectionate servant,
 1692. THO. COMBER."

The above letter was answered on the 7th of May, by the Lord President, who highly

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applauded his loyalty and zeal for the public good, and desired a list of the particulars intimated in his last letter. There is no reply extant to this letter, but in one dated the 17th of August, 1692, to the Lord President, a most melancholy picture indeed is given of the state of the north in general, and of the county of Durham in particular. He says, “*the enemies of the government* in these parts were become strangely audacious, and the *friends* thereof *scarcely lukewarm*, of which the late assizes held there had given strong proof. Judge N.” he says, “did not once name King William in his charge, or encourage the adherents of the present government, and when one was tried for *wishing confusion to King William*, all endeavors were used to get him off. The judge,” he adds, “was solicited by some belonging to the bishop, the jury packed, the King’s witnesses baffled by counsel, and neither encouraged by Judge N. nor supported by one man on the bench. So that,” says he, “I was forced either to stem an universal torrent, or sit silently, and see *a known criminal* brought in *not guilty*, on the credit of *their evidence* who were *partners in the riot*, but not then indicted.”

indicted." He says also, "that King James's health had been openly drunk about the streets with a reflecting tune, several nights in that week, and the bishop had encouraged, or at least connived at these proceedings, insomuch that he thought all things threatened *a general defection*. Nothing," he says, "is in such great danger as *honest zeal*, and that unless he has better support, he must sit still, and *only provide how he may fall decently*." CHAP.
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He received a letter from his predecessor, Dr. Grenville, dated from *Havre de Grace*, May 6th, 1692; which, if his own hand had not signed it, could hardly be credited as containing his sentiments. It is properly directed on the outside, but in the inside, in Dr. G.'s hand writing, is said to be "A letter from Dr. Dennis Grenville, *Dean of Durham*, to Dr. Thomas Comber, the present *intruder* into his deanry." He informs his correspondent, that "James II. is at the head of a considerable army, with a noble fleet, proportionable ammunition, &c. with the design of *restoring himself to his crown, the church to her privileges, and the subjects to their liberties and properties*: and that he (James II.) is now in circumstances,

X 3

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stances, if resisted, *of hewing out his way to the throne with his sword.*" He further advises, that "as Dr. Comber had heretofore sounded from the pulpit *the trumpet of rebellion*, he should now repair his error by his zeal for the interest of James, and to promote his return."

After the complete overthrow of those vast preparations, Dr. Grenville sent another letter on the 12th of July, 1692, dated from Saint Germain, which is much of the same completion as the former. He begins by preaching the doctrine of resignation to the divine will, in the failure of the late attempt to reinstate James on the throne of England, but he asserts the hopes of his party are not at all damped thereby, and that there is no ground to conclude they will be finally frustrated. He undertakes to confirm the assurance contained in King James's *Declaration* of the security of the Protestant religion. His attempt, however, to substantiate this assertion, is founded only upon his having frequently heard James repeat the same thing ; but the people of England had already had pretty convincing proof what degree of credit was to be attached to the word of that misguided prince.

He

He expatiates much at large on the freedom of his own mind from a spirit of revenge; he magnifies the good lives of James and the court of Saint Germain's; and draws a comparison between them and the court of London, much in favour of the former. He adds a long postscript, to confirm the pretence of the pretender's birth, and again attempts to strengthen his assertions about the security of religion, liberty, and laws. CHAP.
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In another letter in which he signs himself *John Thomas*, he informs Dr. Comber how he may safely remit to him any sum or sums of money as *his steward*; and refers him to a former letter on the same subject from one *I. Smith*, in which he had probably mentioned who was to be understood by *John Thomas*, which fictitious name was, probably, fixed on, to prevent the ill-consequence of a detection of the conveyance, which would have been justly interpreted *high treason*.

If we reflect upon the circumstances of Dr. Grenville's first acquaintance with Dr. Comber, the extraordinary warmth of the regard he so repeatedly professed for him, and his treatment of him as above related, it is

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difficult to concieve he possessed a sound mind at the time of writing these letters and others of a similar complection which he sent to his successor : every impartial person must either arraign *the soundness of his head* or *the integrity of his heart*.

It was probably about this time, Dr. Comber wrote an excellent little piece, called, "*The Pretences of the French Invasion examined, for the Information of the People of England.*" With admirable skill he refutes these, which he divides into four heads, viz.

I. Repairing the injury done to the late King.

II. Delivering us from the oppressions we suffer under the present King.

III. Settling the government on the old basis.

IV. Securing the Protestant religion to all future ages.

In answer to the first, he shews, that all James's sufferings were occasioned *by himself, and his popish counsellors*, so that, if he was injured, it was by himself.

In answer to the second, that James had one considerable tax in time of peace, and would have

have had more if he could have got them, to enable him to *ruin* England, and that he discouraged trade; on the contrary, King William's taxes were occasioned by the *Papists*, and *Jacobites*, and *that war* which they made necessary, and which also discouraged trade. He adds, that James's conduct in Ireland shews, that experience had not made him wiser, and that his residence in France must have made him worse.

To the third, he shews, that the *little* and *necessary alteration* in the succession, is nothing like making the monarchy *elective*: and, that the friends of the new government, are no friends to *republicanism*.

In answer to the fourth, he shews, that nothing can be so absurd, as to expect the Church of England should be protected by *one* who is a client *professedly* of the French persecutor, and a gallicanized Pope.

Though he had ever lived on terms of good neighbourhood with the Bishop of Ely, and Lord Preston, yet, in his heart he thoroughly detested the disloyal measures they were engaged in at this time, and which tended to bring ruin upon the church and state by an application

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plication to France in favour of James ; and he has in a very lively manner expressed those sentiments in a fragment of some *flowing verses*, which appear amongst his manuscripts, and will be inserted in the appendix. There is also amongst his papers, a short copy of "*Verses on the Retaking of Namur*," with a just application of the enemy's motto, "*Amat victoria testes*."

A friend wrote to him about this time, desiring him to revise Dr. King's "*Present State of the Protestants in Ireland*," in order to a new edition by Mr. Clavell. He gave a favourable ear to this public spirited proposal, and composed an excellent preface to that truly protestant work, in which he undertakes to shew, that in all the great branches of government, James II. carried on the design of destroying *liberty, property, and protestantism*: that he prosecuted this scheme in a more covert and secret manner in England, but more openly and avowedly in Ireland. The annals of King James II. reign, which he had compiled from most authentic information, proved of the greatest use in prosecuting and completing this design.

Having

Having endeavoured unsuccessfully for several years to procure a suitable match for his brother-in-law Mr. Thornton, and such an one as his family, fortune, and education, might entitle him to expect; he at length accomplished a marriage treaty with the friends of a young lady who had a portion of near 3000l. which in those days was esteemed a very handsome fortune; and he took a journey to Newton for the express purpose of acquainting Mrs. Thornton in person with the happy news. This intelligence gave the most heartfelt pleasure to that pious and excellent lady. If we needed any arguments to convince us of the instability of all sublunary enjoyments, and how frequently the cup of joy is dashed from our hands whilst we are raising it to our lips, we have here a striking and affecting instance before our eyes. This tender mother, whose happiness was inseparably blended with that of her children, had soon the most awful necessity laid on her of changing the joy occasioned by these happy prospects, which now seemed opening to her son, into the most severe and poignant grief. Mr. Thornton had never possessed a very strong
con-

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constitution, and going to preach and administer the sacrament at his living of Bolden, in a wet season, about the beginning of June, he caught a violent cold which ended in a fever. After a little time he grew better, and seemed gradually to gain strength, and it was hoped that his youth would at length enable him to struggle through his disorder, and finally overcome it; but, alas! this momentary gleam of sunshine, was soon overclouded with a lasting gloom, for he fell into a relapse which proved far more dangerous than the first attack had been. From this period he grew daily worse for the space of ten days, and then yielded up his spirit into the hands of his maker. His mortal remains were interred “in the Nine Altars” of the cathedral church of Durham, where an handsome monument was erected to his memory.

Mr. Thornton's character is thus delineated by Dr. Comber, whose intimate acquaintance with him gave him the best opportunity of any man living to draw a faithful representation thereof. “He being a very well-bred man, a good scholar, and obliging to all, was much lamented by all who knew him; and especially

especially by his mother, as being her only son, and the last male-heir of a very antient family, in which the estate had been at least four hundred years." To this character of Mr. Thornton it may be added, that his reputation for wit was so well established in the university of Oxford, that he had the honour of composing a *terræ-filius* speech in that learned seminary.

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The north-side rooms of the deanry being in great decay, Dr. Comber pulled them down for twenty yards in length, new-built two very good ground rooms, and two chambers over them, with a stair-case, and covered the whole with lead, which cost 300l. and upwards; and on the 18th of June in this year laid at the deanry himself for the first time, but his family did not come till several months after. In his way to Durham the preceding day, he had a providential deliverance from death by a fall from his horse betwixt North-Allerton and Darlington, which he acknowledges with marks of true piety, and unfeigned gratitude, to a good and gracious God.

Having been put into the commission of the peace at the assizes at Durham, on the 23d of July

CHAP. July, he preached the assize sermon before the
XII. judges *Atkins* and *Powell*, taking his text from
Rom. xiii. 6.

The Earl of Dorset, lord chamberlain, sent him an order on the 30th of August to wait on their majesties as chaplain in ordinary the ensuing October, but, by his interest with the Queen, he got excused till the April following.

On the 15th of September he received an agreeable visit from his relation Mr. Alexander Johnson, who was grandson, by the mother's side, to Dr. Thomas Comber late Dean of Carlisle. This visit, it is natural to conclude, would remind so truly pious a person as the dean, how all his hopes of preferment in the church, at his first outset in life, had appeared to be utterly ruined by the death of that excellent man, his relation and promised patron : and, doubtless, would induce him to lift up his heart in religious gratitude to that Almighty Power, which had so providentially raised him up friends in the most wonderful and unexpected manner, and at last had exalted him to a situation of even greater eminence than that which had been possessed by his learned and worthy relation.

The

The latter end of September, the dean and Mr. Purchas, in right of their wives, proceeded to divide the late Mr. Thornton's estates betwixt them, settling such an annuity upon Mrs. Thornton for her life as was satisfactory to her: the dean chose East-Newton for his share, for which he had so many reasons to have a decided partiality; and Mr. Purchas obtained *a more valuable allotment* in other estates belonging to that family. CHAP.
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The dean's family safely arrived at the deanry on the 13th of October, and on this occasion he did not forget to offer his solemn and grateful thanks to the Father of mercies.

His patron Archbishop Tillotson, having sent him a virulent pamphlet against their majesties, said to be written by Sir James Montgomery, entitled, "*Great Britain's just Complaint, &c.*" the tendency of which was to alienate the minds of the people of England from King William and Queen Mary; he, having answered this seditious production, sent what he had written to the archbishop, who perusing and approving it, printed it without the author's name*. Two letters from Arch-

* See Birch's Life of Archbishop Tillotson, 8vo. p. 394.

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bishop Tillotson to Dr. Comber are extant on the subject of this publication, in one of which his grace approves of the design of an answer to it, and especially by the dean's hand ; in the other his grace says, " he has acquainted the Queen with the substance of the paper Dr. Comber had sent, and her majesty was well pleased with it, and the great zeal he had shewn for her service in those critical times." The archbishop adds, " he thinks it *so very well done*, that the author of it, whether himself or some friend of his, should be known." He says, " he had put it into Mr. Clavell's hand to be forthwith published, but not to name or guess at any body as the author of it, as he did not certainly know that himself."

Having now a little time to breathe, after the great hurry and fatigue he had lately gone through, in the beginning of the month of December he set himself down to write about the *fifth council*, and prosecuted the work with unremitted attention and vigour.

1693. It appears from the dean's notes, amongst other things, that though he had been nominated as a justice of peace, in the preceding year,

year, he did not take the oaths to qualify him to act, till the middle of the month of January, in this year; and that in the middle of February following, he was made a commissioner of the land tax. These appointments seem to have been given him without any solicitation on his part, and solely from a conviction of his ability and inclination to discharge the duties of those offices with fidelity to the government, and advantage to the country. To undertake the office of a justice of the peace with the view of promoting the welfare and peace of society, as the dean certainly did, and without regarding the trouble and inconvenience which are annexed to the faithful discharge of that important trust, is a resolution deserving of the highest praise; but to have in view the minute emoluments of the office, and to be guilty of acts of meanness in order to secure them, is the object not only of our just reprehension, but also of our severe indignation and contempt*.

The great number of dignitaries of the church, who had been deprived at the time of

* Judge Blackstone, in his elegant Commentary on the Laws of England, hath handled this topic excellently well.

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the revolution, naturally, and indeed necessarily caused a great deal of confusion in the interval of filling up their places, and dishonest and unprincipled men did not fail to take advantage of these circumstances to avoid the payment of their dues. It appears that others, as well as the dean, were under the necessity of commencing actions to recover their rights, which under various pretexts, were attempted to be evaded. One Wilkinson, of Durham, in particular, had received the rents of certain estates belonging to the deanry, which were not due till long after the deprivation of the late dean, from whom he pretended a mortgage of those lands, and consequently due to his successor: Dr. Comber, notwithstanding he could easily have proved the receipt of *several hundred pounds* by the said Wilkinson, at the request of the chapter, and for peace-sake, referred his interests to the arbitration of the Rev. Dr. Eyres, prebendary of Durham, and the Rev. Mr. Ward, rector of Stokesley, in Cleveland, and accepted the sum of *sixty pounds* in full discharge of his demand. The above instance shews in a very striking light, that he was by no means of a litigious turn, as the several law suits

suits he was forced into may induce some to imagine ; but, that he desired as much as possible to avoid them, and where that could not be effected, to end them as speedily as possible.

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We have had frequent occasion to remark, that he was ever intent on improvements of every kind, even though attended in some instances with considerable expence, and in others with no less trouble to himself ; in conformity with this turn of mind, he now began to think of improving a considerable piece of barren and uncultivated ground in *Bear-Park*, belonging to the church of Durham. With the concurrence and approbation of the chapter, he therefore took up and inclosed 130 acres in that place, fenced, and planted it with *fifteen hundred ashes*, and *five hundred oaks*, most, or all of them, brought from East-Newton ; and this, he remarks, he did “for the good of posterity.” This great improvement was completed in the month of March, in this year.

It now became necessary for him to turn his thoughts to the discharge of his duty as chaplain to the Queen, which we have seen he

CHAP. found means to be excused from doing the
XII. latter end of last year. He therefore set off to
London the latter end of March, and arrived
there just as his majesty was setting off for
Holland. He performed the office of chap-
lain, from the 1st of April till the 15th, in
that interval preaching twice before the
Queen, namely on the 7th and 9th, and on
the 12th of May following safely arrived at
Durham.

Many of the bells in the cathedral of Dur-
ham being much worn and damaged, he en-
deavoured to procure a subscription for a new
set. In the beginning of June he sent for a
bell-founder from London, and entered into
an agreement with him to cast eight new bells
for the sum of *three hundred pounds*. He be-
gan the subscription with his own name, for
an handsome sum, as Bishop Crew would not
contribute a single farthing. From the well-
known character of this bishop, it is natural to
conclude, that if those bells had been cast, and
set up in the reign of James II. and baptized ac-
cording to the Romish ritual, he would have
contributed largely towards the expence of
them.

Having

Having obtained authentic information that CHAP.
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the late dean, Dr. Dennis Grenville, had an offer from the executors of Dean Sudbury of *five hundred and fifty pounds* for the dilapidations of the deanry, a very short time before the doctor went over to James, and which that event prevented from being put into execution, he renewed the suit which had been commenced by the doctor, but at the request of some friends of the deceased dean's lady, consented to receive just *one-fifth part* of the above-mentioned sum. "So averse," says he, "was I always to suits if I could possibly avoid them, even with considerable disadvantage to myself." This remark of the dean's proves the truth of the observation made on this subject above.

There is a letter amongst the dean's papers, which seems to have been written in this or the preceding year, from Mr. P. Nelson, so ingenious and descriptive of the times, that it is hoped the reader may derive some entertainment from the perusal of it.

"Dear sir,

"Not long agoe I happened to be in a company where two persons were talking by

Y 3

them-

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themselves a little a part from the rest ; and I overheard one of them saying, that the *Church of England* had lost its honour and reputation by acting contrary to its antient doctrine of *non-resistance*. The persons were both of them men of learning, or so reputed to be, and they seemed to be of the same mind about this point : however being talking as it were in private, I thought it would be accounted neither prudence nor good manners for me to interpose ; but yet I cannot forget the expression, “ *Manet altâ mente repostum.*” For since it carries not only *an inveterate enmity against the government*, but has also *a malicious aspect upon the church* ; since it is become a popular argument in the mouth of every *Jacobite* to which ordinary people know not well what to reply, and which indeed is the most plausible thing they have to say : for these reasons I think it ought to receive a full and particular answer.

“ ’Tis true there is small hopes of *convincing that generation**, but yet there is need of *confirming others*. And though many learned dis-

* The adherents of James, who may naturally enough be supposed to be blinded by prejudice.

courses are already extant in vindication of the present settlement, yet I do not remember any that handles this matter *with respect to the church*, and with design to satisfy honest and well meaning country people, who are the chief strength of the nation ; and care should be taken that these be not corrupted. For, if the common people, by the insinuations of the Jacobites, can once be brought to entertain this opinion, that the clergy of England have taught *that* for a standing rule to others, to which themselves have practised the quite contrary, it may have a pernicious effect in time to come.

“ Now it cannot be denied but that *non-resistance* hath been preached, and so indeed it ought to be in such a sense as is contained in the scripture, duly comparing one part with another, and no otherwise. There is still a truth in that doctrine which will abide while sun and moon endureth : but then it hath been imprudently managed by some preachers, and carried beyond its line. And as there are many wholesome truths which have been violently driven to a vicious extremity : so, there is none that hath been more abused, or by which the

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people have been more imposed on, than by this same doctrine of *non-resistance*.

“ Wherefore in answer to this malicious charge against the Church of England, these things, in my opinion, ought to be undertaken.

“ First, to state the case of *non-resistance*, and to shew plainly what it is, and what it is not; wherein the use and benefit of it doth consist, and wherein it hath been tortured and stretched beyond its natural bounds.

“ Secondly, to shew that the Church of England, and all the worthy clergymen and other members thereof, in swearing allegiance to King William and Queen Mary, and in their noble endeavours to settle and support our happy government, have done nothing but their duty, nor any thing at all contrary to their doctrine.

“ Thirdly, that the Church of England is not accountable for the ignorance, heats, and extravagances of those ministers that have vented their passions, and preached their own fancies, and not the word of God; and who, out of a blind and fiery zeal for the church would have ruined it, and it had long since been destroyed if their measures had been taken.

“ Fourthly,

“Fourthly, that it is the duty of hearers, “to take heed what they hear,” and not to take things upon the preacher’s bare word. They ought to bring every thing to the rule, and “search the scriptures whether these things are so,” that they be not imposed on by them whose confidence passes for demonstration.

“Fifthly, one might undertake to shew, that those men who are not only *protected* by the present government, but have been delivered by it from *slavery* and *misery*, which even themselves cannot deny, and yet will not submit to it, are a most wretched generation, and ought to be the scorn and contempt of all mankind.

“Upon these heads, I thought once to have ventured on a discourse for the public, partly, to lash the Jacobites for their licentious prating, and partly, to confirm the honest vulgar in their duty and allegiance. But want of time, books, and skill, with some other considerations, have made me shrink from the undertaking. And since there are so many learned men, infinitely better qualified to write than I am, and who ought to be as much concerned for the *honour of the church*, and
prof-

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prosperity of the government, it will be thought presumption in me to trouble myself in such a matter. So that all I shall do, is to shew my good-will to the present government, and endeavour to provoke some learned man to sharpen his pen upon this occasion: for it is to be lamented that men are so cold and indifferent, as to bear with patience the malice and daily insolence of the *Jacobites*. If I had those opportunities that others have, I could not hold my hands; I should certainly defend the government, *without a pension*, "*Difficile est satyram non scribere.*"

"But now, sir, it is time to beg your pardon for this trouble, to which your daily kindness hath emboldened me; in hopes that these hints will not be offensive to you, nor altogether improper, whether I consider you as a magistrate or a scholar, as a friend to the government, or an encourager of learning and good sense; in all which capacities you are watchful for the public good, and willing to promote such things as may tend to the common benefit of *church and state*. If you can persuade some scholar of your acquaintance to draw his pen in the cause I have laid before you, it might, perhaps

perhaps, do as good service as *the best sword* CHAP.
that King William has. I am, fir, XII.

Your most humble servant,
P. NELSON."

In this year he wrote a letter to Mr. Manlove, a presbyterian minister, of Durham, for his opinion of a book which he had lent him, and which confuted all Mr. Baxter took for granted about primitive presbyterianism, and he offers, if Mr. M. will agree to Mr. Baxter's concessions in chapter 3d, and single out two or three of his principal objections, that he will readily answer them. There is a memorandum on the back of this letter that it never was answered.

Being still further anxious to advance the interests of the church of Durham, he sunk a coal pit in Bear-Park, and finding a tolerable bed there, made a drain to carry off the water: however the sale not proving good, and the operator dying, he left off with the loss of sixty pounds.

There is a trait in the character of Dr. Comber which is deserving of the greatest commendation, and ought by no means therefore to be
passed

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passed by without due notice. He seems in his most elevated situation, and at the most prosperous period of his life, never for a single moment to have lost sight of the great first cause of all his success, viz. the superintending care of a good and gracious providence. He never appears so perfectly happy and well satisfied with himself, as when engaged in promoting the interests of deserving men, who had not met with patrons to reward their merit according to their deserts. Amongst a great number of letters, written to his friends to serve others, there is extant one, which, though without date, seems to be assignable to the period of time at which we are now arrived. This letter is in favour of a clergyman, “learned, ingenious, of a good life, and a lover of their present majesties’ government, who had been a laborious and constant preacher above twenty years in a poor country living, not much above 40l. per annum, with a family of *ten* children, which by great frugality he made an hard shift to bring up, &c.”—This gentleman he recommends to the lords commissioners for a small living then vacant, which was about an 100l. per annum, and which

which if he could obtain, would render him
and his large family comfortable and happy. CHAP.
XII.

This earnest recommendation was crowned with
success, as appears by an answer to it amongst
his manuscripts. Thus he endeavoured as
much as laid in his power to return *in kind*
that support and patronage which himself had
experienced, and still received from his great
and powerful friends in church and state.

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From his procuring preferment for an indigent clergyman, to the end of the year 1698.

CHAP. XIII.
1694. IT doth not appear whether the dean made any reply to the several letters he received at different times from his predecessor Dr. Grenville, but for several reasons there is sufficient grounds to conclude he did not: it is very probable this silence at length wearied out the doctor, and after he had sufficiently disburthened his mind, he began to perceive the futility of sending any more letters to his successor. From this period there are no letters extant from Dr. Grenville until the latter end of the year 1699, when he addressed one to Dr. Comber, in which he urged him to give up his deanry, “by the fears of death;” (he having heard of Dr. C.’s illness a little before he wrote it.)—This letter did not arrive till after the death of him to whom it was addressed, and if it had come to his hand in the last illness which attacked him, could have had little effect from such a topic, as no man that ever lived could
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less fear the stroke of death, because no one could have *less reason to fear it*, on account of the constant piety and innocence of his life. CHAP.
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It is very evident Dr. Comber did not comply with his predecessor's advice to abandon the cause of King William and Queen Mary, and to apply himself to promote the interest of James; he seems, on the contrary, to have exerted himself more than usual in defending the existing government, and endeavouring to counteract the plots and evil designs of its enemies.

His zeal as a strenuous revolutioner, and his warmth in supporting the cause of government, drew upon him, as might naturally be expected, the hatred and indignation of the *Jacobites*. Bishop Crew, who already has been noticed as a secret abettor of James and his party, did not let any opportunity pass by of doing him ill offices but he, wrapped up in conscious integrity, and countenanced by the approbation of the *great* and *good* rose superior to the bishop's malevolence which completely failed of its intended effect.

How violent this party was against him is manifested by a most scurrilous anonymous letter

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letter which he received on the 11th of February, and which is still extant; in which was inclosed a printed paper, called "*Remarks upon Affairs*," a most abusive invective against the KING AND PARLIAMENT.

In the beginning of the month of March in this year he had an opportunity of making an advantageous purchase of a lease at Ferry Hill, which he designed as a further provision of his lady when he should be removed from her by death, and which the declining state of his health gave him private reasons to suppose was not very far distant, though he tenderly concealed from her his suspicions of this event.

Finding the inconveniences of a spring journey to London to be very great, by the Queen's favour he exchanged that waiting for an attendance in summer when he had more leisure. In the beginning of the month of August he set off to London, and, on three or four days notice, preached before the Queen on the 29th of August, being a fast-day. His text was taken from Psalm cxxii. 6. and, by her majesty's express command, he was obliged to print his sermon, notwithstanding his desire of being excused.

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In the midst of his ill health he never relaxed from his application to learning, and about this time he put to the press the second volume of “*Roman Forgeries*,” or the third and fourth parts of that work, which, as we have observed above, was the produce of much labour and erudition, and a performance of great and general utility. He dedicated this volume to Archbishop Sharp, from whom he had already received many marks of regard and esteem.—He begins his dedication by an avowal, “that as he reckoned his grace’s acquaintance when at a distance, an honour, and none of his least felicities, so now when that happy providence which delivered these nations, had brought his grace to illustrate these northern regions with his doctrines, and warm them by his example, he thought the dedication of these papers against popery the most proper expression of his high satisfaction.” He adds most genteely, “frauds and forgeries are naturally your aversion, and therefore the discovery of so great an heap of them, may I hope be acceptable to your grace, not on your own account, to whom, probably, here is nothing new, but, because this essay may assist young

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divines,

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divines, &c.” The forgeries examined in this volume lie between the years 400, and 553, the end of the fifth general council.

On the 11th of September he returned somewhat indisposed to York, on the 22d of the same month removed with his family to Durham, and on the 29th began his residence in a very deranged state of health.

He set himself to write an “*Epitome of his two large Books of Tithes*,” by the familiar way of dialogue, which he intended for common use; and on the 7th of December sent it to the Archbishop of York, who was pleased to give it the sanction of his entire approbation.

The dean informs us, that, about this time, “with great and just grief he received intelligence of the death of his invaluable friend Dr. Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury, on the 22d of November in this year.”

The character of this great and excellent prelate has been drawn by so many great and learned men, who were in habits of strict intimacy with his grace, and therefore peculiarly well calculated to give a faithful delineation thereof, that the reader can be at no loss for an accurate and circumstantial account
of

of every particular relating to him. His pu-
pil and intimate friend Dr. Gilbert Burnet, CHAP.
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Bishop of Sarum, Mr. Le Neve, Dr. Birch,
and Mr. Beardmore, are amongst those that
have endeavoured to do justice to his memory,
and they concur in attributing to him a very
remarkable modesty, which could only be
equalled by his great and comprehensive
abilities, his profound and accurate learning,
and his unaffected politeness and condescen-
sion.

The instances of his moderation and self-denial, with regard to money matters, which are handed down to us, are not less commendable than they are uncommon. Bishop Burnet in his funeral sermon informs us, amongst other things concerning him, that "he despised wealth, but as it furnished him with the means of extending his charity, in which he was *judicious* as well as *liberal*." And on another occasion he says, that "though he had enjoyed considerable preferments many years before he was raised to the archbishopric, and filled that post above three years and an half, yet he did not improve his fortune from his two successive deanries, or from that see."

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The following points in the character of the archbishop, as they are drawn by Bishop Burnet, cannot be too-deeply impressed on the mind, or too-faithfully copied into the life and actions of all men : “ *A decent but grave cheerfulness* made his conversation as lively and agreeable as it was useful and instructing.— He was ever in good humour, always the same, both accessible and affable. He heard every thing patiently, and was not apt either to mistake or suspect ; his own great candour disposing him to put the best construction, and to judge the most favourably of all persons and things. He was never imperious or assuming ; and though he had a superior judgment to most men, yet he never dictated to others.— And as no man had observed human nature more carefully, or could judge better, so none made larger allowances for the frailties of mankind than he did.” The archbishop’s death affected both their majesties with the deepest concern, and it is said, the Queen for many days spoke of him in the tenderest manner, and not without tears ; and that his majesty never mentioned him, but with some testimony of his singular esteem for his memory.

memory. His biographer says, that “the sorrow for his death was more universal than was ever known for a subject, and when his funeral was appointed, there was a numerous train of coaches filled with persons of rank and condition, who came voluntarily to assist at the solemnity.”

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Thus fell this great and good man, equally lamented by their majesties and his fellow-subjects: his successor, Dr. Thomas Tennison, is described by Dr. Birch as “one indeed fit to follow him, having much of the same temper and spirit in him;” it was however a long time before the memory of Archbishop Tillotson was forgotten, and he was never remembered but with sentiments of unfeigned sorrow, either by the King or the public in general.

The dean begins his account of the transactions of this year, with the following warm and pathetic description of the Queen’s death. 1695.
“On new-year’s day we received the afflicting intelligence, that the best of women, and my most honoured mistress, our dear Queen, died of the *small-pox* on the 28th of December, to the inexpressible loss of the church, and the grief of all good men.” The Sunday following,

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lowing, being the 5th of January, he preached a sermon on this melancholy event at the cathedral at Durham; and on the 5th of March, being the day of her late majesty's funeral, he delivered *a speech*, as he himself informs us, at four o'clock prayers, to bewail this loss. There is reason to regret that nothing of this sermon, or of the speech above-mentioned, is come down to these times; since he, who excelled so greatly in whatever was tender and pathetic, would doubtless have exerted himself with singular zeal and animation on the present occasion, where, from the note he made on this event, his heart seems to have been very warmly affected. Sufficient occasions have already presented themselves of remarking, that of all the amiable and virtuous passions which animated his breast gratitude was predominant. With respect to himself, therefore, in his individual capacity, he would doubtless call to mind the many acts of kindness which her late majesty had shewn to him, and would not forget the great and inestimable benefits he derived as a member of the nation at large, from the happy event of her exaltation to the throne of these kingdoms. With regard

gard to the public blessings derived to the subjects of this realm, his faithful memory would naturally paint in the most lively colours, the many acts of tyranny and oppression which the late King James had exercised, and would contrast them with the mild and gentle government of his son-in-law and daughter, who were the happy instruments of rescuing us from that tyranny. The circumstance of the many public blessings which the late Queen had been the instrument of procuring for these kingdoms, the dean would doubtless impress on the minds of his audience, both in his sermon and the oration he delivered on this lamented event, and would set them off with all the powers of eloquence and zeal which he possessed to so high a degree.

We have had frequent occasion to mention his poetic vein in the course of these memoirs, and, on the present occasion he did not forget to invoke the muses, who seem to have heard him with a propitious ear, for he composed a most pathetic and affecting “*Elegy on the Death of Mary II. Queen of England.*”

The King, as was natural to suppose, was nearly and deeply affected on the above trying

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occasion, their majesties having lived in that degree of connubial felicity, and uninterrupted confidence, as to be not only a pattern for all crowned heads in that respect, but also for all married persons of every rank and degree. His majesty knew how to appreciate the worth of his consort, and is said to have borne this testimony to her virtue, “that he could never see any thing in her which he could call a fault.”

Thus, greatly and justly lamented, died the most amiable Queen that had ever sat on the throne of England, to whom, with the King her consort, the nation was indebted for rescuing it from POPERY and ARBITRARY POWER, ascertaining the just rights and liberties of the subject, and governing the kingdom according to the principles of *justice* tempered with *mercy*.

Not being deterred by the ill-success of his experiment for coal in Bear-Park, as hath been mentioned above, in the month of July, in this year, he began to try for coal in a part of his estate at East-Newton, where he had been taught to expect it in large quantities; but, after sinking as much money as he thought common

common prudence would justify, without ha-
ving these expectations fulfilled, he gave up
the further prosecution of this attempt.

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In the month of July he finished the parsonage-house at Thornton, which he had built from the ground. He purchased also a piece of freehold land for an orchard, which he added to the garden, and enclosed with new walls, the whole of these improvements costing him several hundred pounds. He seems to have had a great partiality for Thornton, and at different times to have been a munificent benefactor to it, but there is no certain tokens now extant whereby we may learn from what peculiar circumstances it arose. He does not seem ever to have had it in his power to reside upon it for any very considerable time together, his presence being indispensably necessary at his other preferments, but he kept a resident curate there, who is mentioned in some of his letters, and for whom he afterwards procured preferment. Whether his inability to reside on the above living, induced him to lay out more money upon it than he otherwise would have done; its being named after a family for whom he entertained so high
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and just an esteem, and from an alliance with which so great a portion of his happiness flowed ; or the circumstance of its having been given him in so truly noble a manner by Sir Hugh Cholmeley ; or whether all these facts combined together operated upon his mind, certain it is, that the effects of his good will were so solid and lasting as to remain even to this day, though those persons who are partakers thereof may be ignorant of the hand which bestowed them, and the motives which produced such bounty.

In this year a person of the name of Atkinson had detained tithes which were justly due to him, and not being able to prevail on the party to refer the matter to the award and arbitration of impartial persons, or even to pay any thing as a consideration for the same, he thought it a duty incumbent on him, both in justice to himself and successors, to ascertain the right by suing the party in the court of exchequer. This harsh step, he says, he was driven into contrary to his inclinations, and nothing but the reasons above stated could have induced him to do it. Upon the hearing of this cause, the court, in consideration of his
manifest

manifest injury, gave him 40l. costs, besides the value of the tithes. “However,” adds he, “if it were not that I secured the title, I got *cruentam victoriam*, being 20l. loser, besides the large costs of 40l ; so that this success will not make me have any better opinion of suing than I had before.” He observes, “the defendants costs in the above cause amounted to the sum of *one hundred and twenty pounds*, for what might have been paid with FIVE POUNDS.”

About this period he finished his book on the three offices of the *fifth of November*, *thirtieth of January*, and *twenty-ninth of May*; he also reviewed, corrected, and in some places enlarged, his folio edition of his Commentaries on the Common-Prayer, but, for the present forbore printing another edition of that work on account of the scarcity of paper.

The chapter of Durham, to encourage the woollen manufacture, bought twelve wheels, and sent twelve poor girls to a spinning school which had lately been set up in Durham. The dean, greatly approving the step, which had for its objects, the support of the manufacture of the staple commodity of the kingdom, the giving

1696.

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giving bread and employment to the poorer classes of the community, and the rendering them useful members of society, gave it all the encouragement in his power. The justices being assembled at the sessions on the 16th of January in this year, he persuaded them to give the master of this school the sum of *fifty pounds* of arrears in hand, and to article with him, in consideration of receiving the annual sum of 40*l.* (which was due from the Bishop of Durham) to keep fourteen poor girls, and instruct them in spinning and reading for the space of one year : at the expiration of the year to send them out well taught to spin, and to find them work at home, and to take fourteen more and instruct them in like manner, and so on from year to year. This patriotic and benevolent charity would doubtless have been attended with the most beneficial effects, both to the community at large, and to the poor children intended thereby to be put in the way of gaining an honest livelihood by their industry ; but it seems, that after a little time, several ill-disposed persons laboured to *pervert* this excellent charity, and at length totally destroyed it.

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In the beginning of this year he purchased a small freehold estate at Nether-Dunsforth, which, at his death, he left amongst his family.

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XIII.

About the middle of February he appeared for himself, as Dean of Durham, and for his chapter, as their proxy, at a convocation held at York, and insisted *in writing* of the dean and chapter of Durham being exempted from the jurisdiction of the court of York. The latter end of February he set out on his journey to London, and on his road thither accidentally heard of the plot to destroy the King. The Duke of Leeds* on the 8th of March introduced him to kiss the King's hand, who, on that occasion, publicly thanked him *for his good and faithful services*. His waiting as chaplain began on the 16th of March, and during the month he preached twice at the chapel royal. He had the honour of being introduced to the Princess of Denmark, and Duke of Gloucester, but was seized with such a severe illness, he was obliged to discontinue his attendance, and to leave Dr. Mills to officiate as chaplain in his stead, the three last days of his waiting.

* Late Marquis of Carmarthen.

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He was so exceeding ill when he left London as to be in great danger on the road, and when he got home was confined to his room an whole month with a dangerous fever; at length, by the mercy of God, and the skill of his physician, he so far recovered as to remove to Durham from Newton in the beginning of June, but not without great difficulty.

The Bishop of Durham visited the chapter on the 25th of August. Heats and misunderstandings arose on this occasion, which the dean endeavoured to allay, and, after divers meetings, ordered it so that they were privately composed. "This business," he says, "cost above 20l. in a very dear time, and no good was done by it." The dean and chapter finding the wooden bridge an heavy expence to them in repairs, and considering moreover that it consumed a great deal of their best wood, which for that reason began to grow scarce, this summer built an handsome new bridge of hewn stone, which, as he justly observes, "was a work of great advantage to the public, and an ease to their successors."

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In the beginning of September, with the assistance of Mr. Miller, the precentor, he began to place the books in order in the new library, which had lately been built at Durham; but, expecting many new ones to be shortly added, they did not put themselves to much trouble in ranking them with exactness, or to expence in preparing catalogues.

In the month of January, in this year, he had begun to make collections for the *fifth* and last part of his Commentary on the Common Prayer, viz. *On the Office of Ordination, &c.* he finished this work in the month of September, but, owing to the scarcity of paper, did not then put it to the press.

The latter end of November and the month of December, God sent a severe affliction upon him, by visiting all his children with a dangerous disease. On the 25th of November, his second son began to sicken with the *small-pox*, his eldest on the 10th of December, his youngest daughter on the 22d of the same month, and his eldest on the 28th. The consternation of the parents on this visitation may easily be conceived, and the extreme derangement of his own health, doubtless added to

CHAP. to the common distress. When the disease had
XIII. come to its crisis, favourable symptoms appeared, and at length their youth and strength surmounted its virulence, so that in due time they were all restored to a perfect state of health.

This happy escape of his children from a distemper which had proved fatal to such great numbers, afforded him an opportunity of lifting up his heart in religious gratitude to heaven, and his satisfaction would have been complete, if the gradual decay of his own health had not in very plain language told him, that the period of his being called away from his family could not be very far distant. On his own account, this was not a matter of unmanly grief or despondency, but the consideration of the unprotected state of his family on that event taking place made it a source of the most poignant and lively sorrow. He comforted himself however with the reflection that the almighty creator of heaven and earth, who had so constantly been a friend and protector to himself, would also be a shield and defence to his widow and children.

The dean made a note, amongst other things, that the audit being ended on the 1st of December,

comber, he receded from his right in two considerable points, to his great damage, for the sake of preventing factions and unseasonable contests in ill-times; “but,” adds he, “tis not unusual for me to buy peace.”

Having preached a sermon on the 2d of December, on Psalm cxliv. 15. he was prevailed on to print it, and it accordingly came out about March in the following year.

Though the dean's health had appeared to his friends to be considerably improved, and his family had entertained the pleasing hope of its perfect re-establishment, yet in reality his constitution was gradually giving way to the repeated attacks of fevers and other severe distempers: his close application to study also greatly injured his health, and by slow, yet sure advances, the very foundation of his existence was sapped. 1697.

The new and elegant library which the chapter had finished some little time before, made a very handsome appearance, and they determined to spare no expence in making the collection of books in every respect suitable to it. About the middle of March, in this year, they purchased complete editions of all the

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CHAP. classic authors in octavo, *cum notis variorum* ;
XIII. and then finished the arrangement of them,
and caused exact catalogues to be made.

The fountain belonging to the chapter having been much out of repair, they raised and new cast the cistern, mended the pipes, and completely repaired the house belonging to it, which was finished about the middle of April, in this year. He observes, that “formerly, on a similar occasion, Bishop Cofins had contributed largely, but now Bishop Crew would not contribute a single farthing.”

There is a speech which seems to have been composed on this occasion, in which the several instances are enumerated where the dean and chapter had merited the eulogiums which the bishop would not bestow ; and in answer to the two objections of, *want of gratitude to the bishop*, and *a disrespectful demand of contribution to a fountain*, the dean observes severely, though justly, that “there was a prince who must not now be made a precedent, that expected such as he advanced should requite him by an obedience *without reserve* :” he shews how *useful* the fountain was to the bishop’s castle, what great things Archbishop Lamplugh had done

done for the church of York, and how very ample was the bishop's revenue. CHAP.
XIII.

On the 21st of April he received the unpleasant news of the death of Mr. Purchas, who it seems had broken a vein by riding seven miles every Sunday and preaching at his cure, having previous to this accident spit blood for some considerable time. It is a matter of regret, that the dean hath left no sketch of this gentleman's character, his near connection with him by affinity having indisputably qualified him to give a faithful delineation thereof.—Mr. Purchas left a widow, three sons, and two daughters, to lament his death.

About Michaelmas, in this year, he published the “*Discourse on Ordination, &c.*” which he had finished in the month of December, in the preceding year. He also printed his discourses on the offices of the *fifth of November, &c.* which had also been finished some considerable time. In his discourse on the fifth of November, he speaks of the revolution in these terms: “Behold God hath delivered us from a second, and *more probable design* to destroy our religion and our laws. For now they had secretly gained the next heir to the crown

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to their side, and *dispensed* with him to come to our prayers, sermons, and sacraments, for many years, and allowed him to *swear* and *solemnly promise to defend our church*, at his entering into the throne. But, blessed be God, this design was at last discerned by almost all the nation, and though they could not prevent it, he did by sending on this very day a *generous protestant prince, &c.*" Again, "Our enemies hoped the waves would have swallowed him, and a bare rumour of that event, made them cry high, and be as violent as ever, to convince us it was not love to us, but fear of him that made them desist. But heaven set him safe on shore, and then their next attempt was to expel him again by force; but no considering Protestants could be found willing to destroy their deliverer, or to fight against their own religion and liberties. Thus all opposition fell before him, and that unhappy prince, who had deserted the God of his fathers, was deserted by his army, and then secretly himself *deserted the nation*, leaving us no other choice but to remain in anarchy till he should return with foreign force, or to put *the next undoubted heir* with her consort *our deliverer*, (who was
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a near branch of the same royal house,) into the *vacant throne, &c.*"

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In the office for the thirtieth of January he has this reflection ; “ That which makes a royal family dear to the nation, is not *barely* their *own right*, but their being what God intends them, “ the ministers of God to them for good.” The martyr’s first son,” says he, “ was beloved by all, because he restored to them their *liberties* and *religion* : but we have seen an experiment since, that when one of that family attempted to subvert one of these *two dear things*, nothing could make his people believe him to be a blessing. However, blessed be God, we have now the martyr’s grandchild on our throne, who keeps up and defends *our true religion, and old monarchy* : wherefore it is fit we should now turn our *praises* into *prayers* for the prosperity of all the branches of this royal house, &c.”

In his discourse on the twenty-ninth of May, he says, “ No malicious representations of his [King William’s] designs or actions, no little scruple concerning what the law hath made *his right*, no revenge for *losing* or *missing* *some private advantage*, must make us deny

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our allegiance to him who so well deserves it, especially since, as Englishmen and Protestants, we have no prospect of a change, but what (if it be brought about by force) will make us *ten times more miserable* than we ever were before the *restoration*."

1698.

In the early months of this year the dean turned his thoughts to the recovery of certain lands, situated in Croxdale and Stainforth, which, from negligence and inattention, were near being lost to the chapter. Upon narrowly investigating the business, the leaseholders acknowledged these lands belonged to the chapter, but that they had been long confounded with the freeholds; therefore he proposed to have them surveyed, butted, and bounded, and the chapter readily agreed to it, so that about the latter end of March this great improvement was entirely completed.

A Jesuit, who signed himself F. S. having written against Mr. Rogers' book on the thirty-nine articles, the dean finished an answer to that publication about the middle of August, and immediately sent it to him *unprinted*. This was a method of treating a popish adversary, especially a Jesuit, very unusual. Perhaps, from
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a particular knowledge of the man, he thought him more capable of conviction than people of his order usually are ; or he might be desirous of seeing what exceptions he and his party could make to this answer. The latter supposition is the most probable, as he treats his adversary with a degree of severity which was not very likely to gain his good opinion, or conciliate his attention. CHAP.
XIII.

This was a very considerable work, upon a subject of great importance, and one of the last which the dean wrote ; it was also not only a very acute and full reply to the Jesuit's arguments, but a striking proof that though his health was on the decline his understanding was in no degree impaired.

About the middle of September he went to Thornton to settle the charities in the new trustees, and take in the accounts, but caught a violent cold, which on the 21st instant, nearly took away his voice, and brought on him continual defluxions during the whole winter.

In the beginning of November he agreed with Mr. Smith, nephew to the maker, to dress the organ, make the stops good, and new voice

CHAP. it all ; which was afterwards done in a satisfac-
XIII. tory manner.

He persuaded his friend Mr. Morris, rector of Aldborough in Yorkshire, to present many curious medals, &c. to the library at Durham ; and the latter end of November prevailed on the chapter at their audit to give *twenty pounds* to promote a Saxon grammar, which his friend Dr. Hickes was then going to publish : the chapter also by his advice gave the same sum to the Rev. Dr. Bray, to purchase books for the clergy, who, under the doctor as suffragan bishop, were going on a mission to America, to convert the Indians in the plantations there to the christian religion.

Though there had been a very close and friendly correspondence between Dr. Comber and Dr. Hickes previous to the revolution, and in consequence of that providential event, the former became an established dean, and the latter a deprived one, yet it does not appear whether their correspondence *immediately ceased*, or *slackened*, or whether if it still continued it turned upon that signal change in the government. It is certain, however, that the above
event

event did not break the bond of christian charity, which should subsist between all the professors of our Saviour's religion, at least that it was not broken on the part of our dean.

About Christmas his complaints attacked him with increased violence, and it is probably about this time that his friend Dr. Smith, (as appears from a letter still extant, which he wrote to Mrs. Comber after the dean's death,) exhorted him to prepare some of his sermons for the press. He excused himself from complying with this proposal, on the plea of his having written out *very few* with that accuracy which was necessary for the above purpose.— Indeed, if we except those preached in the cathedral at Durham, and some few on particular occasions, published at the request of his congregation, he wrote out hardly any, having always adhered to the plan of *preaching from notes*, which he first began as soon as he took priest's orders upon him. Dr. Smith acknowledges that he knew not how far the dean complied with his repeated request to make a selection, but, he says, if Mrs. Comber would entrust the papers to him, he would either chuse such as might do honour to his memory, or none
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CHAP. at all. Dr. Comber certainly thought seriously
XIII. of his friend's advice, for he wrote out texts of
scripture for an whole year, which, if his life
had been prolonged, he would probably have
caused to be fairly transcribed.

About this time he ceased to take notes of
the transactions which befell him, from which
circumstance it is evident his illness must
have been very violent, as it neither left him
leisure or *spirits* to add any thing to a small
book of *memoranda*, which he seems to have
constantly carried about him. What is fur-
ther added to these memoirs is supplied by
family tradition, and what was committed to
paper by his son and grandson.

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Containing an account of the transactions of the last year of the dean's life, and a general idea of the leading features of his character.

THE spring, which gives relief to many distempers, gave none to that of the dean, whose indisposition appears to have been a confirmed consumption, and the ravages it had committed were such as could no longer be concealed from his family.

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1699.

On the 11th of April, the learned and ingenious Dr. Edward Gee, his brother chaplain, addressed a letter to him, in which he gave an account of his travels in Spain, Portugal, France, and Italy. The accounts the doctor gives of the deplorable state of learning in those countries, must have afforded the dean great amusement, at the same time that he would doubtless have deplored it.

“In passing through Spain and Portugal,” the doctor says, “he had daily opportunity of seeing popery undisguised, and very different from what it pretended to be in England, and
if

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if they had talked of their religion in those countries as they did in England, he was firmly persuaded they would not only have been clapped into the inquisition, but would have been burnt too, for what they would have called *such damnable errors*, unless they had confessed them and begged pardon.

“As for learning,” says the doctor, “I know not whether any thing left among them deserves that name. In philosophy they are no farther advanced than Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas; and *the motion of the earth*, and the *circulation of the blood*, are as absurd paradoxes to them, as ever was the notion of the *antipodes*. In philology they are,” says he, “as great strangers, neither knowing, or caring for any new books, and being entirely ignorant of the present history of learning.” In divinity, he judged them to be at the same pitch; for, “though they talk about fathers and councils, I appeal to you,” says he, “what skill they are like to have in them, or in the antient church historians, when they do not understand *one word of Greek*, even the Jesuits themselves not pretending to teach it in their schools. Therefore,” says he, “I have told some of my friends,

friends, that if ever they have to do with a popish priest, let them but pull out a Greek testament or bible, and it will prove an exorcism to them." The doctor visited their libraries, and says he found them *miserably furnished* for the most part.

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He relates the following pleasant anecdote of an adventure at Seville in Spain. "When I visited their libraries," says he, "I used to make particular enquiries after manuscripts, and, till I knew them better, was sent on many an April errand about them. In a convent of the order of Saint Austin, in Seville, I asked a father whether they had not some manuscripts of Saint Austin, the father of their order, and he told me they had many *of his own hand writing*. We could not go to the library then, it being afternoon, when it was locked; but, the next morning, I was in no little solicitude to hasten thither, to see such a sight; but what do you think I was entertained with? A sight of a poor edition of this father's works *in print*, which was all the poor soul meant by *manuscripts of Saint Austin's own hand writing*.

"When I left Spain," says he, "I crossed the Mediterranean to Italy, hoping to find things

CHAP. things much better there, but I cannot say
XIV. my expectation was answered, for the priests
there neglect learning, and the Greek tongue,
almost as much as they do in Spain and Portugal.

“ At Naples, some of the lawyers have entertained the Cartesian philosophy, have a value for Erasmus, (whom all I had hitherto conversed with abhor,) and would bring the Greek tongue in vogue, by setting up a school for it, but I could not find it made any great progress, the clergy hating *heathen Greek*, though it was the original language of that, and the neighbouring cities of *Magna Græcia*, as that part of Italy was formerly called.

“ At Rome I conversed chiefly among those who had larger thoughts, and a regard for learning, but *these* are a very small number, and, together with the cardinals whom I conversed with, I found entertained a great opinion of the learning of the clergy of the Church of England, and they often expressed a concern, that they did not write more frequently in Latin among us.

“ At Florence, Sienna, Leghorn, and Genoa,” continues the doctor, “ I found learning much
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the same as at Naples; a miserable ignorance of the Greek tongue, which was the more deplorable, especially for Florence, where I believe is the greatest collection of Greek manuscripts of any city in the world, the Vatican at Rome alone excepted.

“When I came into France,” says he, “I thought I should find learning in a flourishing state indeed, but when I got to Aix in Provence, where I visited Padre Pagi the Franciscan, (as I had promised the famous Magliabechi of Florence that I would do,) he gave me no such promising account of things. He told me, learning was much in its wane amongst them, that there was little or no encouragement given to learned men, and all the preferments in the church were bestowed on those who had *no other qualifications* for them but their *high birth*, and *no other merit* but their *quality*: and that Greek learning was next to extinct among them.

“When I came to Paris,” adds he, “I found the learned men there in the same note; the Abbot Longverve (who is one of the most learned men in France, and excellently well skilled in the oriental languages and others, as
well

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well as in history,) profest to me that they had not only lost the Greek learning, but almost the Latin too, from among them, hardly a Jesuit being to be found who was master of it. He accounted for this, amongst other things, by all the valuable books being translated into the French tongue, so that no body minded or studied the originals."

Dr. Gee concludes his long and agreeable letter, with an hope, (alas! vain,) that he should have leisure when the dean and himself waited together in the winter in London, to discourse many particulars which the bounds of a letter could not contain.

In the course of this last year he addressed several letters to Mrs. Thornton, sometimes by the hand of one person, sometimes of another, one or two are also extant in his own handwriting, in the early part of the spring — Whenever he thought himself a little better in his health, he communicated it to Mrs. Thornton, knowing that it would give her pleasure; and whenever he was obliged to mention his ill-health, he did it with such calmness and resignation to the will of heaven as shewed him to be in the ready disposition of submitting to its decrees,

decrees, and bowing to all its dispensations.—

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Every one of the numerous letters which are extant at this day from him to Mrs. Thornton, breathe the most tender affection for that excellent lady, and the most anxious solicitude for her individual comfort and happiness, and for the prosperity of every part of her family. In one letter of his addressed to her, he says, “I return you my most hearty thanks for your kind notice of my birth-day, and can only assure you I am so much obliged by your prayers and good wishes, that the rest of my time which God grants me, shall be laid out *for the service of you and yours* ; as part of that which is past hath already been.”—The above affectionate resolution was strictly put in execution to the last moment of his existence.

Having been named a trustee in Mrs. Purchas's marriage articles, on the death of that lady's husband, he interested himself warmly for her, as might naturally be expected. In one letter to Mrs. Thornton on the subject of her abovementioned daughter's concerns, he says, “I will see her, if possible, as I come by, *and give her my best advice*, and can do

CHAP. no more unless any seem to *wrong her* or
XIV. *hers*, which, if it happens, *I will openly op-
pose.*" This lady, it appears from letters still
extant, was drawn into an unfortunate second
marriage, but, even on this imprudent step the
dean did not forsake her, on the contrary he
endeavoured to make her peace with old Mr.
Purchas, who was much incensed against her
on that occasion.

On the 28th of October he addressed a letter
to his bookseller, Mr. Clavell, on the subject
of his different publications. The letter which
appears amongst his papers, seems to have been
the original letter which he sent, as it has the
post mark upon it, and probably was returned
to his widow after his death, with a view of
shewing it to some of her friends for their ad-
vice concerning the works therein mentioned.

"Your second volume," says he, [meaning
doubtless, of the *Companion to the Temple*,
which was printed in folio a year or two after
this,] "if I have health, as I hope I may, shall
consist of divers saleable tracts, the newest of
which, is a *most elaborate and useful explication
of the Lord's Prayer*, collected, almost *verbatim*,
from the fathers, whose very words in Greek

or

or Latin are cited at large in the margin. It will be more than half as big as any one of the four parts, and the method is *so new*, that I think it may sell as well as any thing I ever wrote. *It is finished*, and you shall have it sent to you as soon as I can meet with a good conveyance.

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“As to the tract on the office of ordination it will sell *single*, equal to any *two* of *their parts*; and the two volumes of the *History of Liturgies*, which I thought to have shortened, are books that must be valued by all who love the *Common-Prayer*: I shall keep them as they are, only making an excursion briefly to chastize a busy fellow who makes very bold with my name under pretence of writing the “*History of the Rise of Cathedral Worship*.”

In a postscript he adds, “I had forgot to tell you of a little piece of mine and yours, about *frequent and fervent prayer*, which I have augmented, and is a very saleable piece.”

Besides the above pamphlet, about the rise of cathedral worship, he was attacked in another tract published about this time, entitled “*The History of Passive Obedience*,” in which a large quotation was made from his book called

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“*Religion and Loyalty, &c.*” in a note on this part of the above tract he endeavours to shew that the passage in question is not so much to the purpose as the collector endeavoured to represent it.

In the beginning of November the dean, by the pen of his eldest daughter, wrote a letter to Mrs. Thornton, in which he informs her of his intention of soon coming to pay her a visit, and upon his arrival he addressed these affecting words to her: “*I am come, madam, to lay my bones near you and my other mother.*” How greatly a person possessed of such a tender heart as Mrs. Thornton, and who both entirely loved, and had the most solid reasons for loving him, must have been affected by this speech, his looks at the same time confirming the mournful tidings, those persons who possess a feeling heart, and those only, can fully conceive. The dean had long been the support of Mrs. Thornton’s house, the anchor on which her hopes had confidently rested, the consolation of her widowed state, the last and best comfort which was left to her declining years; and now alas! she saw herself on the point of losing him. Already she
had

had felt the pang of parting with an indulgent husband—an only, and entirely beloved son had been snatched away from her in the prime of life—and her youngest daughter had been left a widow with five little children. These it must be confessed were severe and bitter trials, and it required all the fortitude and strength of a Christian to sustain them. But she did not think herself entirely bereft of comfort, whilst the pious and excellent dean was spared to soothe and alleviate her poignant and heart-rending sorrows. But alas! the bitter cup of affliction was not drained to the bottom, as yet the arrows of adversity were not all of them expended: one trial yet remained *to crown all the rest*. Unsatiated with the sacrifices which had already fallen before him, the remorseless tyrant DEATH had marked out another victim from this afflicted family, and he now made his approaches with rapid and gigantic strides. The dean had, however, as little occasion for a particular preparation for this awful visitor, as any man could have; since he had made his whole life a preparative for it, by the habit of *self-examination, prayer, and pious resolution*. His re-

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signation to the will of his creator, and his patience under his afflicting hand, doubtless, continued exemplary to all around him to the latest moment of his existence.

From the time of his arrival at Mrs. Thornton's house, his intestine enemy consumption daily seemed to gain ground upon him, and had almost completed its appointed service of sapping and destroying the very foundation of his being. At length the oil of life was entirely consumed, and the light of existence was faintly glimmering in the socket, when, on the evening of the 25th of November, nature entirely sunk within him, and the merciful disposer of all events, by a quiet and gentle departure, called his pure and innocent spirit from this scene of mortality and imperfection, to the fruition of that unspeakable and eternal bliss, which had been prepared from the very foundation of the world, for those, who, like him, have feared God and trusted in his promises, and faithfully observed all his holy and just commands. Such was the conclusion of the mortal pilgrimage of this truly good and righteous man, *and such may be the happy and peaceful death of all those who will live like him !!*

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Conducted by the supporting hand of a good and gracious God, he passed through this transitory scene of doubt and error, of imperfection, adversity, and various toil, here upon earth, and at length arrived at a land of unmixed and perfect happiness, of glorious and eternal reward: maintaining that rank in society allotted him by providence with fidelity and honour, he receded from it at last with dignity and composure; and having led his innocent and blameless life according to the even tenor of his maker's will, he yielded it up into the hands of him who gave it, with gratitude and holy resignation.

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Blest and happy spirit that inhabitest eternity! if “those who are departed hence in the Lord” are permitted to behold the things which are below the sun, may this pious tribute of respect to thy goodness and virtues, prove an acceptable offering to thy gentle shade!

His body lay in a decent kind of state for some days, and then, according to his own request, was buried within the communion-rails, in Stonegrave church, close by the side of his mother's remains, which had been interred there some years before.

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His

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His old and intimate friend the Rev. Charles Man, rector of Gilling, preached his funeral sermon, the text, taken from Romans xiv. 8. was chosen by himself, he having formerly preached a sermon upon it at the interment of a friend. It is a cause of regret that no part of this sermon is now remaining, though it is certain Mrs. Thornton long preserved it amongst her papers, there being still extant a letter from a relation of her's, dated in the year 1714, in which it is mentioned; indeed, with respect to Mrs. Thornton herself, there was no need of the aid of words to stamp an idea of the dean's excellence on her *heart*, a lively recollection of it being *there* delineated in characters which could never be effaced.

An handsome marble was laid over him, on which was engraved a long and elegant Latin inscription, composed by his friend the Rev. Mr. Milner, minor canon of the cathedral church of Durham; which, together with a translation thereof, will appear in its proper place in the appendix.

His widow, whose affection induced her to pay all possible respect to his memory, put the church of Durham into mourning at a vast expence,

expence, so that on the whole the costs of his funeral amounted to several hundred pounds. CHAP.
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His expences in repairing and furnishing the deanry—the hospitality of his table—his extensive charities at Durham and elsewhere—and the great, though necessary additional expences of his household and equipage, were such, that his family were not in the end much richer for the several considerable preferments he had held. He left behind him however, upon the whole, such a provision, that his descendants, at the distance of a century from the time of his death, though numerous, are, by the blessing of God, some of them in splendid situations, and the rest, without exception, possessed of a moderate and genteel competency.

His person, from all accounts, appears to have been very handsome. His stature was moderate—his features small and regular—and his complexion very delicate; so that, notwithstanding the ravage of disease, his picture (from whence the engraved head is taken) is said to have lost its colour faster than his face. His hair was of a light brown, and naturally curled—

CHAP. curled—his eyes blue—and his voice extremely
XIV. sweet.

He was very partial to music, both *vocal* and *instrumental*, and when he wished to unbend his mind from his severer studies, it formed one of his principal amusements. He sometimes played at chess, that most noble and rational of all games; but he did not so often amuse himself with it as he could wish, because the fixed attention it required prevented its being a relaxation to him, and he observed that he generally rested ill the night after he had played much at it.

The great distance of time which hath elapsed since Dr. Comber's death, makes it difficult to ascertain how many editions his different works passed through; but we have seen that his "*Advice to the Roman-Catholics*," very soon after its publication, passed through several, and there is reason to conclude that many of his other works, especially those which were popular and adapted to the times, met with similar success. It is certain, that about the year 1701, Mr. Clavell published the second volume of the *Companion to the Temple*,
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in folio, in London. Dr. John Smith, prebendary of Durham, and his old friend Dr. Cave, revised the several pieces of which it is composed, and prepared them for the press. A letter which Dr. Cave wrote to the publisher, is very judiciously prefixed to the work, as it gives a fair and candid view of the several parts thereof.

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The doctor advised also to prefix to this volume *a general preface concerning the usefulness and necessity of forms of prayer in public worship*, which had been prefixed to the octavo edition of the *Companion to the Temple*: this advice was followed. It should be observed however, that this discourse includes more than its title, added by Dr. Cave's advice, seems to express; for it not only represents the usefulness and necessity of forms of prayer, but the usefulness and even *necessity of frequenting public worship*: it also expatiates on the *three hours of prayer* in the primitive church, &c. One point insisted on in favour of *forms of prayer*, viz. that as our Saviour repeated his prayer in the garden, he must have *prayed by a form*, seems less conclusive than that which follows, viz. that *he gave a form*
to

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to his disciples, which is called, for the sake of distinction, “*The Lord’s Prayer.*” Yet when the matter is examined closely, it will appear *absolutely conclusive*: for as his design there was to shew, that *a form does not damp the spirit of devotion*, and Christ’s devotion is represented as *agonizing*, therefore it is full in point.

From the view which the preceding sheets have given of the *active and useful life* of the dean, and of the multiplicity of works which he undertook and finished in the course of that life, it must have appeared evident to every impartial observer, that great and comprehensive learning—sincere and unaffected piety—steady loyalty to his King—and the most ardent zeal for the honour and advancement of the protestant religion, were the leading features of his character.

To these sound principles in religion and politics we may venture to add, the warmest affection in the private relative capacities of a son, an husband, a father, and a friend; with the most unremitting diligence and attention in advancing the cause, and promoting the interests of religion and virtue.

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The success which attended his progress through life was by himself attributed, with that pious gratitude which was the predominant feature in his character, to the foundation which was laid in the early part of his education, “in the principles of religion as well as learning;” and he constantly paid the just tribute of gratitude on this account, both to his master Mr. Walter, and to his mother. Our own experience must, doubtless, have convinced us of the justice of the above remark, and those who have happily experienced the advantage of early instruction in pious principles will readily add their testimony in support of it. The incalculable advantages of employing the early period of childhood in impressing religious sentiments on the mind, will be felt through life; but scarce any future advantages, however great, can atone for the neglect or misapplication of those important hours. It is certain that the happiness or misery of our lives, depends more upon the use or abuse of this interesting period than is commonly supposed.

Those who have been properly instructed in infancy, will bear the smiles of fortune with mode-

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moderation and gratitude, and its frowns with patience and resignation, when called upon to encounter the one or the other, in the more advanced periods of life : but if they have been brought up in a neglect of religious sentiments, and with an indulgence to the wayward propensities of human nature, they will inevitably be proud and insolent, wretched and dissatisfied in the most splendid circumstances, and equally despondent and dejected under the ordinary trials and afflictions of life.

The first fruits of this his early piety was a lively and sincere gratitude to those who had trained him up in it ; and particularly a most ardent and well-founded affection towards his mother, who had not only given him existence, and with unceasing tenderness watched over his tender frame, but also carefully instructed him in the means of rendering that existence pleasing to his creator, honourable to himself, and useful to his fellow-creatures.

This principle of filial gratitude and affection, which glowed with such warmth and purity in his breast, gave a cast and colour to every future action of his life.

From

From the affecting manner in which he speaks of his mother's death, it is apparent that though, in obedience to what he considered as *the call of heaven*, he fixed himself at a very considerable distance from her, and by a concurrence of circumstances the separation happened to be of long duration ; yet he never for a moment forgot the obligations which were due to *her* whom he styles "the most affectionate mother in the world." It appears that an equal degree of reciprocal affection existed in his mother's mind, for the moment she was released from the tender duty of soothing the declining years of an aged parent, her thoughts recurred with energy and delight to the grateful image of a beloved son ; and when an opportunity presented itself, she visited him in person, and sincerely rejoiced in his prosperity. The melancholy catastrophe of that visit called forth all the tenderness of his nature, and exhibited him in the most amiable and engaging point of view.

Nor did he confine his filial regards to her alone who gave him life, but also extended them to her who stood in the same near and tender

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tender degree of relationship to a justly beloved wife. He conducted himself with the same degree of delicate and refined attention to that amiable and pious lady, as though he had indeed been her son ; and he considered every part of her family with the same warmth of affection, as if they had been as nearly allied to him by consanguinity, as they were by affinity. Not satisfied with watching over the education of his lady's brother, Mr. Thornton, and after he was prepared for the university, conducting him there in person, recommending him to the care of able and attentive tutors, and promoting as much as laid in his power his interest in that learned seminary ; his protection further extended itself to him after his departure from thence. We find him afterwards taking on himself the charge of providing for him in the church, and interesting himself warmly to procure for him a suitable matrimonial alliance, though his kind intentions in this respect were frustrated by that gentleman's untimely death.

The same affectionate interest extended itself to whatever concerned the happiness and well-being of his lady's sister ; and his benevolent inten-

intentions to procure solid happiness for her were crowned with greater success.

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If such were the proofs of his regard for the relatives of his lady, what strong and ardent affection may we not naturally conclude he bore to herself, who was in every respect deserving of his utmost tenderness. To those susceptible minds which know how to appreciate the value of a refined and virtuous affection, it will be unnecessary to describe the supreme felicity, which a perfect union of hearts is capable of affording: to those who are not possessed of such feelings, the attempt would be impertinent, if not impossible: thus much however may be asserted in general, that whatever happiness this world can afford; whatever portion of genuine bliss we can hope to taste on this side eternity, is to be found *in the reciprocal affection of two hearts united in the bonds of virtuous love.*

As he who is bound by the filken cord of affection to an amiable object, will naturally contemplate with rapture the pledges of their mutual love, if he had been entirely silent on this head, we might have ventured to conclude he possessed for his offspring in the highest de-

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gree all the tender impulses of parental regard. There is however no room left for conjecture on this head, since whenever the occasion made it necessary for him to speak of his children, and particularly whenever it pleased heaven to take any of them to itself, he records these events with such evident marks of genuine feeling, tempered with resignation to the will of heaven, and submission to its decrees, as denote the *Christian* and the *man of sensibility*.— Severe we have seen were the trials of this kind, which it pleased heaven to lay upon him; but his patience and holy resignation were at last amply rewarded, and after having resigned to his heavenly father many of those boons which he had lent unto him, at length it was permitted him to retain his gifts.

Nor did he sustain the part of a *sincere* and *disinterested friend* with less dignity than the more *near* and *tender relations* of social life.— With the power we behold him possessing also the inclination to promote the interest and happiness of all whom he considered as fit objects of his regard. The attentive reader of the foregoing memoirs cannot fail to have remarked how strenuously he exerted himself
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to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of others, by his advice, his interest, and his personal exertions. He may indeed be justly styled “the friend of human kind;” his philanthropy being ever ready to exert itself for the virtuous and good, whilst his indignation was as constantly excited by dangerous and obstinate error, or by mean and irreclaimable vice.

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His modesty and inambition were singularly remarkable. Content with a moderate fortune, he was desirous of continuing in a private station, though possessed of abilities and integrity capable of adorning the most exalted and splendid rank. Insensible equally to the calls of ambition and the allurements of wealth, we behold him declining situations of honour and emolument, to obtain which thousands have made shipwreck of their honour and conscience. When the importunity of his friends had at last prevailed on him to lay aside his thoughts of continuing in obscurity, and induced him to step forward into a more public life, we see him respected by all the great and good men of his time, and frequently receiving public marks of esteem from the lips of royalty itself.

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The same modesty which had made him desirous of continuing in a private station, still adhered to him when preferred to an eminent dignity in the church : unassuming and humble in private life, in public he was dignified without pride, and generous without ostentation.

During the time of his precentorship at York, his interest and authority were employed in counteracting the unworthy projects of the dean of that cathedral ; and when he was afterwards advanced to the deanry of Durham, he as vigorously and effectually opposed the schemes of *Crew*, which were of the most dangerous and treasonable complection. In this he certainly acted a truly noble and honourable part, and in the minds of candid and impartial men, must have entirely done away any blame which might have been attached to him by his enemies, for his conduct in opposing the *Exclusion Bill*, in the reign of Charles II. in his pamphlet called “ *Religion and Loyalty*,” as hath already been related at large above.

His uniform and constant attention to improve the living of Thornton at his own private cost and charge ; the great advantages which he gained to the chapter of York, by
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the recovery of sundry lands which had been lost through neglect; his unwearied zeal in adorning and beautifying that magnificent structure the cathedral; his exertions in procuring a new and elegant organ, setting in order the library, and ornamenting the altar; the solid benefits which he in like manner procured for the chapter of Durham, the cathedral and library, as well as the charities and public buildings of that city, all of which were derived from his unceasing attention to their interests: these are standing monuments to his praise, and records of his fame, which will transmit his name with respect and honour to the latest posterity.

The high and just respect in which he was held by all the great and good men of his time; the regard entertained for him by King William and Queen Mary, as well as the Princess Anne of Denmark, afterwards Queen of England, added to the consideration of his own learning and high deserts, are sufficient grounds to conclude, that if his life had been protracted a few years longer, he would have been raised to much higher dignities in the church: but, independent of conjecture, we

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have the testimony of written evidence in original letters to himself, and his answers to them, from which it appears, that if he had survived the Bishop of Durham, he would have succeeded him in that see.

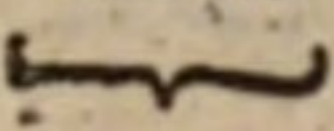
Ripe in good works, and rich in virtue, it pleased the almighty disposer of all events, to call him from this state of trial here upon earth, before his existence was embittered with the reflection of having committed one unworthy action, or perpetrated a deed of which it was necessary for him to repent. Let not therefore weak and short sighted mortals arraign the ways of Omnipotence; let them not presume to find fault with the unerring dispensations of him who inhabiteth eternity.

But if the duration of his life was comparatively short, yet it became *in effect long*, by having each hour of it *actively and usefully employed*. For if we consider the weakness of his earliest years, and the frequent attacks of fevers, and other acute diseases, at different periods of his life, we may justly wonder how he could find time to perform so many noble acts of public utility and private benevolence: and if we call to our recollection the active scenes
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and the multiplicity of business, in which he was continually engaged, we are not less surprised that he should be able to produce so many useful and voluminous literary productions as are found recorded in the foregoing authentic memoirs. CHAP.
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Upon the whole, it may undoubtedly be fairly said, that he who can act his part on the grand theatre of human life, with that dignity, honour, and undeviating rectitude, which so conspicuously shone in every action of the learned and pious dean, that person will be entitled to the approbation and esteem of men, and will not only merit, but assuredly receive, a great and inestimable reward at the hands of his maker.

The perusal of the foregoing artless and humble narrative may serve to convince us, that there are not wanting many striking instances in history to animate our hopes and invigorate our exertions, where it is sufficiently evident that virtue is oftentimes rewarded with outward success and prosperity, and always with inward peace of mind, even in this present life ; whilst a sure reversionary crown of glory and never fa-

CHAP. XIV.  ding felicity await its acceptance in a future state of existence.

If the above useful lesson should be so effectually imprinted on the mind of only one individual, of those who may happen to peruse these pages, as to engage him in the service of virtue, after having drawn him from the pursuits of vice, this great and excellent man will neither *have lived to no purpose*, nor will his biographer *have written these sheets in vain*.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

PAGE 6, line 22.—Was descended from a very ancient family, &c.

The arms of the family given at the Herald's Office, in 1571, to one of our author's ancestors, *Mr. John Comber, of Shermanbury, in the county of Suffex. gentleman*, are, field, or : bend wave, gules : three stars, sable. Crest, a lynx's head.

About the beginning of our author's life, astronomy was much in vogue in this kingdom, as see the celebrated *Elias Ashmole's* article in *Biog. Brit.* This gentleman having for the motto to his fanciful work, intitled, "*Fasciculus Chemicus*," taken the following sentence, "*Astra regunt homines*," our author, in allusion probably to the stars in his coat of arms, took a sentence directly opposite to *E. Ashmole's*, and very becoming a christian divine, viz. "*Sapiens dominabitur astris*:" thus early shewing a remarkable strength of mind, which could rise superior to the prevailing superstition of the times. His family motto before this change, was "*Honor virtutis præmium*."

P. 6, l. 26. —De Combre, &c.

Here he writes his ancestor's name according to its *French* derivation. He wrote his own differently at different periods of his life, but it is difficult to assign a satisfactory reason for it. The compilers of the *Biog. Brit.* justly observe, that though his name is printed *Comber* before his works, it is written *Cumber* in the admission books at *Sydney College, Cambridge*. He wrote it
in

in the latter manner in several books which he purchased in early life, and probably altered it after the example of his relation *Dr. Comber, Dean of Carlisle*, though one cannot precisely fix the time of this change. It is remarkable that his most intimate friends *Dr. Cave* and *Dr. Hickes* addressed their letters to him by the name *Cumber* so late as between the years 1680 and 1690.

P. 8, l. 18.—Five children, James, &c.

James, the eldest son, married *Mrs. Hannah Harper*, of *Cheshire*, and survived his younger brother, our author, as appears by a letter of his still extant, dated after the dean's death. *Dr. Comber* was not only instrumental in procuring him a lucrative situation in the post-office, but also served him essentially in other respects. Whether this gentleman left any issue by the above marriage is not known, nor is it clearly ascertained how long he survived the dean.

P. 8, l. 25.—At the end of the year, &c.

The compilers of the *Biog. Brit.* in our author's article suppose him born in the year 1645, reckoning probably back from the time of his death, as fixed on his tomb-stone. But the year in his time commencing at the 25th of March, and he being born on the 19th, is the reason that he describes himself to be born "*at the end of the year 1644.*"

P. 12, l. 8.—Mr. Walter having composed a Greek grammar, &c.

The absurdity of teaching any language by a grammar wrote in it, is so glaring, as to make it surprizing any should fall into it: yet how long has the *tyranny of custom* prevailed for teaching *Latin* in this manner. In a very early manuscript of our author's, is part of a Greek grammar in *Greek*, which is very likely to have been the same he transcribed for Mr. Walter.

P. 13, l. 25.—The Dean of Carlisle died about this time.

This dignitary is said by the compilers of the Biog. Brit. to have died on the 28th of February, 1653, at Cambridge, and to be buried on March 3d, in St. Botolph's church there, and refer to *Br. Willis* in his *Deans of Carlisle*; to *Lloyd's Memoirs*, p. 447; and *Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy*, part ii. p. 9.

P. 17, l. 21.—Specimens of the sermon notes, &c.

On the 20th of March, 1658, Mr. Holland preached a sermon of which Mr. Comber took the following notes:

1 Cor. x. 3, 4, 5.

The Apostle is here comparing the *law* and the *gospel*, shewing how the shadows of the one agreed to the substance of the other, one of which is here instanced in the text, viz. an exact similitude between the meat and drink of those carnal Israelites in the wilderness and the food of Christians in the wilderness of this world; that is, the body and blood of Christ compared with *manna* and *water of the rock*, which last is called *spiritual meat*. 1st, As to the effect: for those that eat it with trust in God's providence should be accepted. 2d, From its signification; for it sets out unto us the true spiritual meat, which is Jesus Christ.

1. Christ, as to his body may be compared to manna in these respects. 1st, As the Israelites were preserved alive by it, so Christ preserves by this our bodies and souls unto eternal life. 2d, As that was given to them from Heaven for their nourishment, so are the graces of Christ in this sacrament reached to us from Heaven itself. 3d, As to the proportion—it was not he that gathered most that had the largest, so here he that eats the most, &c.

2. Christ, as to his blood, to the rock, &c. 1st, A rock is a secure fortress from danger. 2d, A sure foundation. 3d, A
rock

rock is dangerous in the night, so is 1 Cor. i. 23. so Christ resembles a rock in general. But this rock did *in particular* set him forth. 1st, It had water contrary to its nature: so Christ had perfect righteousness, which was contrary to human nature. 2d, This rock sent not forth water till it was smitten; nor Christ till he had suffered for our sake, and for our sins. 3d, Moses's rod struck this rock; so our breach of that law was it which struck him most severely.

Both together typify our sacraments.

1. In being real bread and water, yet not in an ordinary way.
2. In being food in the wilderness.
3. In being distributed by an invisible hand.

Use. 1. Let us pray for nourishment by this spiritual food.

2. Let us fear to condemn it, for see ver. 5.

3. Let us praise God for his great mercy to us above them; we have the *substance*, they only the *shadow*.

Obs. 1. Learn to understand these mysteries.

2. Amend our lives to be fit to partake of them.

3. Get faith in Christ for receiving benefit from them.

Though in the above discourse there is too much fancy indulged, yet is it on that account the more remarkable that our young scholar should so well remember and preserve these various strokes.

P. 20, l. 9.—*Music and painting, &c.*

Whether Mr. Matthews's instruction extended to the practical part of music, or was solely confined to its theory, is not certain; but he appears to have been very fond of it, and was probably a good judge of it. With respect to his knowledge of painting we can speak with greater certainty, there being still extant several curious specimens of his proficiency in that elegant, pleasing, and useful art; as particularly, "*The elements of heraldry*," or "*The art of blazoning coats of arms*," executed by his own hand in a very neat, and indeed masterly manner.— There is another work of his also extant of this kind, in high prefer-

preservation and very beautiful, which is the “*Pedigree of Mr. Thornton's family*,” in which he hath not only blazoned the Thornton arms but quartered those of the different heiresses who married into that family, the whole does great honour to his taste and execution. He likewise drew out a very highly finished and very long “*Pedigree of Mrs. Thornton's family*,” the ancient and noble family of WANDESFORD. This last performance commences with GALFRIDUS DE WANDESFORD, in the nineteenth year of the reign of Edward III. and continues the account through thirteen descents to the period of time when he composed it. Dr. Comber's accurate knowledge of the ingenious art of heraldry enabled him to execute the above-mentioned curious works with the greater exactness and fidelity.

He also took a view of *King's Chapel* in *Cambridge*, with common pen and ink, in a very neat manner, considering the uncouthness of his materials.

P. 23, l. 20.—Indefatigable industry.

Early in this year, when he was about sixteen years old, he composed a sermon on Psalm xlviii. 8. It has as little of the faults of the age, namely *formality*, *quotations of Latin*, and *conceits*, as many that were written long afterwards by men of mature age and judgment, and it has the recommendation of *much good sense* and *useful criticism on the Hebrew*; for even when very young, he was such a master of that language as to make a new translation of several difficult chapters. In the above-mentioned discourse there is little, or no *tautology*, and as much matter as is sufficient for several sermons. In the same little book, and nearly in the same hand, therefore probably written about the same time, is an imperfect “*Discourse on the Duty of frequent Communion*.” In this, as in all his works, the good effects of *method* are very visible; having first chalked out the path in which he should walk to his proposed end, he very rarely deviates from it.

There

There is every reason to believe, that as he spent his time in the university well *in general*, so he spent the last year of his residence there *remarkably well*. There are several *theses* which he wrote on *philosophical subjects*, in all likelihood in this year, and very probably he read them at his acts in the schools.— There is in particular one which shews his taste and fancy in the choice of his subjects: it is “*On the Probability of the Moon being inhabited*,” and forms a part of that agreeable scheme which the ingenious *Fontinelle* has so greatly ornamented in his pleasing disquisitions concerning the “*Plurality of Worlds*.”

P. 24, l. 24.—His patron Mr. Pell, &c.

He remarks that *Mr. Pell* lived to hear him preach a sermon in London which gave him great satisfaction, and he expressed it by inviting him to dinner and making him an handsome present.

P. 25, l. 5.—Either in his own college, &c.

He retained all proper gratitude to the memory of the *Countess of Sydney-Sussex*, the *foundress* of his college, and all his life kept a painting of her, finely executed on wood, in an honourable part of his house.

P. 26, l. 6.—To be remembered in his prayers.

These we may be pretty sure he put up to the throne of grace very fervently for him. Our author wrote, though probably many years after this period, an excellent piece “*Concerning praying for others*.” He shews 1st, that this duty is expressly commanded in holy writ; and 2dly, that it must be profitable to those who are prayed for. He esteems the prayers of the church most effectual; next those of the clergy; 3dly, those of parents; and lastly those of good men. He shews that those of others may be profitable to all who don’t put bars to them by obstinate sin, and its consequences God’s rejection. In the last place

place he considers, "how our prayers profit others?" and concludes, that, since God commands them they must profit, though we cannot know the manner, as in many other cases.

P. 32, l. 19.—Alice, daughter of the right honourable Christopher Wandesford, lord deputy of Ireland, &c.

Dr. Thomas Comber, father of the editor of these memoirs, in the year 1778, published the "*Memoirs of the Life and Death of the Right Honourable the Lord Deputy Wandesford, &c.*" It was printed by J. Archdeacon, printer to the University of Cambridge, and sold by Richardson, Cadell, &c. in London.

The authentic materials from which Dr. Comber composed the above memoirs, were, the writings of his lordship's daughter, Mrs. Thornton, and other family documents, pedigrees, &c. Many curious and interesting particulars of the great and unfortunate *Earl of Strafford*, whose relation he was, and whom he succeeded in the lord lieutenancy of Ireland, April 3d, 1640, are therein related. KING CHARLES I. was so perfectly satisfied with the lord deputy Wandesford's character and conduct in that high and important situation, that, in the summer of 1640, he sent over a patent, creating him *Baron Mowbray and Musters*, and *Viscount Castlecomer*. His lordship, however, did not long live to enjoy his new honours, for *Lord Strafford* being impeached and committed to the Tower of London, on the 11th of November, 1640, he was so much affected by that incident (as he had always entertained the truest regard for his lordship) that he was seized with a violent fever the latter end of the same month, which proved fatal to him on the evening of the 3d of December, having been in the distinguished situation of *lord lieutenant of Ireland* exactly eight months. Notwithstanding the shortness of his administration, his suavity of manners and impartial distribution of justice had endeared him to all. Dr. Comber, in the memoirs abovementioned, has the following passage:

"Our

“ Our lord deputy soon after his death received three very remarkable testimonies of love to his virtues ; viz. one from his *King*, one from *the more barbarous part of the kingdom*, and one from *his noble patron (Lord Strafford)*.

“ *King Charles* ordered the expences of the lord deputy’s funeral, amounting to above 1300l. to be paid out of his treasury, and the wardship of his heir, amounting to 2500l. to be remitted : but as the parliament soon afterwards seized upon the King’s revenues, our lord deputy’s family enjoyed only *the honour* of this royal munificence, and this heavy charge of nearly 4000l. fell upon his heirs, together with all other burdens of civil war.

“ *The Irish* at our lord deputy’s interment raised their *peculiar lamentations*, a signal honour paid to him as *the common parent of the kingdom*.

“ When *Mr. William Wandesford*, brother to our lord deputy, carried a suit of mourning on the occasion of his death to *Lord Strafford* in the Tower, his lordship, clapping his right hand on his left breast, as peers do at the time of giving sentence in matters of the utmost consequence, said, “ I attest the eternal God, that the death of *my cousin Wandesford* more affects me than the prospect of my own ! for in him is lost *the richest magazine of learning, wisdom, and piety, that these times could boast.*” Then his brave spirit allowed his heart to shed a shower of tears.

“ Nor can this great encomium,” adds Dr. Comber, “ be justly thought an *invention* or *exaggeration* by our lord deputy’s relations ; for *Lord Strafford*, in a letter dated December 15th, 1640, thus writes to *Sir Adam Loftus* :

“ Mr. Vice Treasurer,

“ Since I left Ireland I have passed through *all sorts of afflictions*, yet I praise God I am not dismayed withal, but trust that God of his infinite goodness, by which I have been preserved to this time, will send me a deliverance forth of these bonds, as I am in them unexpected. But indeed the loss of *my excellent friend the lord deputy* MORE AFFLICTS ME THAN ALL

THE

THE REST, *by how much I have in my own esteem, FAR MORE TO LOSE IN MY FRIEND THAN IN MYSELF.*

Vid. Mem. of Ld. Dep. Wandesford, p. 140.

Being now speaking of a period of time which only a little preceded the bloody catastrophe of King Charles I. the editor knows not where he could with greater propriety introduce the following *interesting and extremely curious testimony* relating to that event.

“The testimony of *Mrs. Thornton*, daughter to the *Lord Deputy Wandesford*, of *Kirklington*, in the county of *York*, concerning a meeting at *Mr. William Wandesford*’s her father’s brother’s house, in London, *the day before the murder of King Charles I.*

“Not long after the death of the said King, being in company with my said uncle and some others, condoling his fate, and condemning the barbarous and bloody fact, he told me there happened to be a *cabal*, or meeting of several persons at his house the day before the said tragedy was acted, *about the execution of it*, as he understood afterwards to his great grief, that such an odious consult should be within his walls: the particulars of whose relation were as follow:

“That *Mr. Rushworth* author of the “*Collections in Parliament*,” came to him some days before the said consult, and desired the liberty of a large room in his house for that day; to give him the key of the door, that he and his company might meet privately, pass and repass, without molestation, trouble, entertainment, or attendance. This he could not deny him in respect of their mutual friendship, and some past civilities: yet the care that was taken for such a convenience, and so much caution to transact it so secretly, made him not a little wonder, and so curious as to observe them. The company came in the morning, not together, but one after another, and were *above a dozen*. He saw several disguised faces, particularly he knew the *Lord Baltimore* and *Mr. William Lilly*, the almanack maker; to be among them, and others suspected by him to be *papists* and *fanatics*; which strange mixture did much surprize him.—

D d

Towards

Towards evening he took notice that *Mr. Rusworth*, and another gentleman, went out, and staid two hours before he returned, and then presently after the company broke up and departed.

“That a few days after *Mr. Rusworth* meeting him gave him thanks for his late civility, and casting off some words by way of enquiry about the meeting there at that time, he freely told him, that the persons there met were the “*Close Committee*,” to consult about *the King’s execution*; that he and another were ordered to wait on his majesty, and use all their art and arguments to persuade him to recede something from his former rigour and resolute stiffness, insisting so much upon his own innocence, and charging the guilt of all the blood shed in the late wars upon the parliament, and to own himself at least in some measure to have been the cause thereof, and justify their proceedings; which if he would do, all of them from whom they came, promised TO SERVE HIM TO THE UTMOST OF THEIR POWER—SET HIM ON HIS THRONE AGAIN—AND MAKE HIM A GLORIOUS KING. But that he obstinately refused the offer as most unreasonable and unjust, and that he could not do it without manifest wrong to his honour, his cause, and his conscience; and thereby should offend God, disoblige his friends, and gratify his adversaries, and [force] all the world to condemn him as a wicked bloody tyrant, and a self-condemned miscreant unworthy to live: and, IF HE COULD NOT HAVE HIS LIFE, BUT UPON SUCH BASE COMPLIANCE, HE WAS CONTENT TO DIE.—So when they could, as he says, do no good on him, being resolved to persist in his wilful way, they bid him prepare himself for the next day he should be executed, at which he said, “GOD’S WILL BE DONE,” and they left him, and what the result was is too well known.”

(Signed) “ALICE THORNTON.”

The following copy of verses seem evidently to allude to the above very remarkable account; they have no date affixed to them, but are in the hand-writing of Mrs. Thornton. Whether she

She was the author of them cannot with certainty be ascertained; they, however, contain sentiments similar to those she hath expressed, when speaking of King Charles, in other of her writings.

Hold out, brave Charles, and thou shalt win the field;
 Thou can'st not lose the day unless thou yield
 On such conditions as may force thy hand
 To give away thy sceptre, crown, and land.
 Thy poor, dejected courtiers rejoice
 To hear thy *royal resolution's* voice;
 And are contented far more poor to be
 Than yet they are, so it reflect from thee.
 Thou art our sovereign still, in spite of fate;
 Our love is to thy *person*—not thy *state*:
 Know, sacred prince, thy friends *esteem thee more*
 Since thy distress, than e'er they did before;
 Although thy wings be clipp'd, our wishes fly
 To heaven, by millions, for a fresh supply,
 That if thy cause should be betray'd by man,
 It may by angels be restor'd again.

P. 33, l. 13.—His proposals being rejected, &c.

The following little *bagatelles* being without date, we cannot ascertain the time of their being written, but they seem to have reference to this first *love affair*.

SONG I.

I.

Wrong not, dear empress of my soul,
 The merit of this passion,
 By thinking he can feel no smart,
 Who sues for no compassion.

D d 2

2. Silence

2.

Silence in love betrays more woe
 Than words though e'er so witty ;
 The beggar that is dumb, we know,
 Deserves a double pity.

3.

And when this silence shall profess
 The words that I should utter,
 Then your discretion shall confess
 That *silence* is a *suitor*.

4.

Although my thoughts do climb too high
 For any mortal lover,
 If reason cannot make them die,
 Discretion them shall smother.

SONG II.

1.

Have I not lov'd thee much and long,
 A tedious *twelve hours* space?
 I should my other beauties wrong,
 And rob them of a new embrace,
 Should I still doat upon thy face.

2.

Not but all joys in thy brown hair
 In others may be found ;
 But I must court the brown and fair,
 Like skilful mineralists that sound
 For treasures hidden in the ground.

3.

And when I've wholly gone loves round,
 Thou'lt prove the pleasant she ;
 With spoils of meaner beauties crown'd,
 At length I will return to thee,
 Full sated with variety.

SONG

SONG III.

1.

What means this strangeness, pray, of late ?

Since time doth truth approve,
This distance may consist with hate,
But cannot stand with *love*.

2.

'Tis either *cunning* or *distrust*,
That doth these ways allow ;
The *first* is base, the *last* unjust ;
Let neither blemish you.

3.

If you intend to *draw me on*,
You overact your part ;
But if it be to *have me gone*,
You need not *halve this art*.

4.

Speak but a word, or do but cast
A look that seems to frown,
I'll give you all the love that's past,
The rest shall be my own.

5.

In such a fair and equal way,
On both sides, none can blame ;
Since every one is bound to play
The fairest of his game.

P. 33, l. 19.—A copy of verses is sub-
joined, &c.

Nor price, nor metal, so much dignify
These coins, as doth their great antiquity,
Which the ingenious value more
Than mines of modern golden ore.

P. 42, l. 19.—Composed a very keen and spirited poem on that writer, &c.

On the EARL OF ROCHESTER writing “*A Satire against Man.*”

What monstrous prodigy is this that dares defy
That which he hath put off, *humanity*?
MAN is a name we must not give the elf
That hates mankind, since nothing hates itself.
To REASON doubtless he'll make no pretence,
Who would be call'd at best but *man of sense*.
Sure 'tis some *mormo* dress'd in human shape,
Whose inside is or swine, or goat, or sheep;
And is't not pleasant that this creature can
Suppose it *wit* to wish itself no man?
There is no room for wishes in this case,
He's now a brute within, but man in face.
If *nature* did not, yet his *vice* at least,
Hath brought him down to th' level of a *beast*.
And if we search the herd we scarce shall find
Among them all, *one of so vile a kind*
As suits with him, unless we judge his nature
Be like his verse, and then he is some SATYR,
His *savage rudeness* and *insatiate lust*
Approve the guess; but after all we must
Seek something worse, for no *full parallel*
For him is to be found on this side hell.
The single crimes dispers'd among the rest
Of criminals, all meet in his one breast.
On these vile things *he* openly dares rush,
At which a thousand secret sinners blush.
Scandal to greatness, one that hath no merit
To gain that honour which he doth inherit,

And

And which his crimes had forfeited long since,
 But for th'abused mercy of his prince.
 His lewd debauches *Epsom*, and *Whitehall*,
 And *Brentford*, loudly do proclaim to all :
 Ask him then why no punishment he fears ?
 He can't be judg'd, he'll say, but by his *peers* ;
 And if none try him but his *peers in evil*,
 His *jury* must be *fiends*, his *judge* a *devil* ;
 The duke whom he reviles, to him was faint,
 He carried fair ; but unless we can paint
Villainy naked, unmasked *blasphemy* ;
 A thing that dares God and the King defy,
 That hates religion, libels majesty,
 Abhors the church, the government, and laws,
 Marriage, and honesty, with all that awes
 His raging lust—unless we paint all this,
 His character and feature's drawn amiss.

P. 44, l. 25.—The titles of some of these poetical effusions are preserved, &c.

The names of those pieces he wrote at this time, are,

1. Mr. Comber's Request made to his *Honoured Lady*, when she went to York to learn Qualities, May, 1666.
2. A Paper of Verses addressed to his *Honoured Friend*, when she was at York, 1666.
3. An Anagram on the Name of his *Honoured Lady*, ALICE THORNTON.
4. A Paper of Verses to *his Lady* after she had the Small-Pox, July 20th, 1666.

P. 45. l. 4.—Best specimens of his talents for poetry, &c.

This conjecture receives strength from the following fragment, which hath escaped the ravages of time :

D d 4

Love,

Love, the golden chain of nature,
 Is the union of each creature.
 This can link two souls together,
 That they shall enjoy each other,
 When the bodies parted be
 By distance, or by destiny :
 Lovers hearts meet and embrace,
 E'en when they are in distant place.
 This is, alas ! the only way
 That I my ardent love can stay,
 I that of late was ne'er denied
 To have my wishes gratified,
 To feast my mind, my ear, my eye,
 With her discourse and company,
 Now in a month (a year to me !)
 I cannot my dear mistress see.
 When aught I see or hear that's rare,
That to my mistress I compare ;
 Thus when I see a bud begun,
 Or little flow'r, which to the sun
 Its virgin bosom ne'er display'd,
 But closes, as it were afraid.

* * * * *

P. 50, l. 14.—Elegant copy of verses to his
 bride, &c.

Have you not seen the *glorious sun*,
 After the darksome night was gone,
 Nimble climb up the azure sky,
 Scatt'ring his beams of majesty ;
 Rejoicing mortals every where,
 Who long had wish'd he would appear ?
 O ! what a smile doth seem to fit
 On ev'ry brow to welcome it ;

And

And glowing Phœbus whips amain
 His weary steeds to mount the plain;
 Disbanding all the mists of night,
 Filling the world with joy and light.
 Just such a welcome waits upon
 Th' appearance of my lovely one.
 Make haste, dear love, oh! do not stay,
 Nor in adorning spend this day!
 Your beauteous form was dress'd before
 With *virtue, piety*, and store
 Of all attractive charming graces;
 And these are more to me than laces,
 Pendants or jewels, knots or rings:
 Let those who from these trifling things
 Do borrow all their worth, take care
 Of these: *thou need'st them not my fair!*"

P. 59, l. 24.—Lived to see sixty-six persons, &c.

It is easy to imagine, that the relicks of an estate snatched from the ravenous hands of sequestrators, and divided amongst a numerous family, could not afford a very considerable share to each individual: yet such is the blessing of God on the offspring of the righteous oppressed, that many of her descendants at the distance of one hundred and twenty-eight years from the time of her death, are in genteel and independent situations; and particularly those that have descended from her daughter, who married the dean's father.

P. 65, l. 5.—“*Considerations about the Fears of the Pains of Death.*”

This invaluable performance is yet extant in the dean's own hand-writing, and would have found a place in this appendix had it not been *too long*, and every part of it *far too excellent* to admit of any curtailment.

P. 65.

P. 65, l. 16.—Elegant Latin inscription, &c.

The following is an exact copy of the said inscription, with a literal English translation for the sake of the unlearned reader.

Hic sita est

MARIA, Filia BRYANI BURTON,
De Westerham, in Com. Cantii,
Uxor JACOBI, Mater THO. COMBER,
Rectoris hujus Ecclesiæ;
Formâ, Vultu, Pietate, insignis;
Quæ hujusce profecta Filium visura,
Abhinc ad Patrem cœlestem revocata rediit,
Maii 13^o. A. D. 1670, Ætatis suæ 52.
Hoc ultimum, Lector, a te postulans,
Ut Sepulchro quiescat inviolato,
Nec aperiatur Monumentum hoc
Nisi Voce Christi,
Cujus Adventum placidè expectat.

Memoria justorum
erit benedicta.

} { Posuit filius amantissimus,
} { amoris specie plenus, T. C.

Here lies

MARY, the Daughter of BRYAN BURTON,
Of Westerham, in the County of Kent,
The Wife of JAMES, the Mother of THO. COMBER,
Rector of this Church;
Remarkable for her fine Person, Face, and Piety;
Who, coming thus far to see her Son,
Was called hence to her heavenly Father,
On the 13th of May, A. D. 1670,
In the 52d Year of her Age.
Reader, 'tis her last Request,
That she may rest undisturbed in her Tomb,
'Till this Monument be opened by Christ's Voice,
Whose Coming she quietly expects.

The memory of the just
shall be blessed,

} { This monument was placed
} { by her most loving son, T. C.

P. 66.

P. 66, l. 5.—He daily used the Common-Prayer.

Bishop Burnet, in his life of Bishop Bedell, says, “ He never used the Common-Prayer in his own family, for he thought it *not so proper for private families* ;” and many divines are of Bishop Bedell’s opinion in this respect, though Dr. Comber thought otherwise.

P. 66, l. 23.—To promote this design he wrote a copy of verses, &c.

Ungrateful children, whither will ye stray ?
 Are all paths better than the *good old way* ?
 Is there no rhetorick in a mother’s call ?
 No charms in tears which from her eyes do fall ?
 If her entreaties cannot peace obtain,
 They may, at least, we hope, a parley gain !
 Give her that bare you leave to ask you why
 Your clamours are so loud, your rage so high ?
 Have I denied the faith which heaven first gave,
 Or *buried sacred truth* in the dark grave ?
 Do I in languages unknown with-hold
 The bread of life ? Is heaven both bought and sold
 Is not the holy word of God my guide,
 The holy spring whence my devotions glide ?
 What I receive from *Jesus* I retain,
 And faithfully deliver you again.
 The holy scriptures and the purest ages
 Gave the materials which do fall from pages
 Of my liturgic form, as is confess’d
 E’en by our foes ; and strangers call us blest,
 Who have a form so pure, so innocent,
 So plain, so pious, and so excellent,
 That none among you ever would refuse it,
 But that I do command, commend, and use it.

Were

Were it your own composure 'twere divine;
 'Tis now *profane*, only because 'tis mine.
 You say, "It stints your *spirit*, cools your *zeal*;"
 Which only can your prejudice reveal.
 Whatever 'tis, if once we truly hate it,
 'Tis loathsome, yea, though God himself create it.
 But could you bring an heart devoid of pride,
 Malice and prejudice being laid aside,
 And try most seriously to beg heaven's aid,
 You'd ne'er repent that by *this form* you pray'd;
 For God would shed his *glorious rays of light*
 Upon the book, to make you see 'twas right,
 And by his spirit warm your frozen heart,
 That you with us might bear a friendly part.
 See how those few that yet do call me mother,
 With hearts and voice encourage one another!
 See how their altars flame, their souls do burn,
 In true devotion! Oh! behold and turn!
 The altar's rear'd! Let's have a sacrifice
 Of peace, to end our foolish enmities.
 I'll bring a book, bring you a pious heart,
 And doubt not then but heaven will do its part.
 His flames shall kindle that which we present;
 His light shall guide our minds to th' true intent;
 His beams shall warm our hearts with holy fire,
 That our *affections* may to heaven aspire!
 This is the means by which alone we may
 With *spirit* and with *understanding* pray.

The following Latin manuscript of Dr. Comber was communicated by the Rev William Comber, vicar of Kirkby Moorside, Yorkshire, the dean's grandson, and the editor's uncle, in a letter dated the 23d of January, 1798, in which letter the writer supposes it to have been composed about the thirtieth year of the dean's life. The editor persuades himself no other apology will

will be necessary for inserting the manuscript, or the ingenious poetical translation of it in English, communicated by a neighbour of his, than what is derived from the intrinsic excellence of them.

ENCHIRIDION THO. COMBER, D. D.

Alias, Regulæ piæ Conversationis, é MSS. T. C. D. D. Dec.
Dunelm. excerptæ.

Piæ cogitationes mané mentem occupent & foveantur.

Occasiones diei instantis serió perpendendæ.

Ferventi oratione anima ornanda et armanda.

Illecebræ peccandi et opportunitates studiosé fugiendæ.

In solitudine cogitationes, in societate sermones, ad res divinas, et ad utilitatem sui ipsius & aliorum, dirigantur.

Nulla occasio benefaciendi omittenda.

Meditando de morte tuâ disce contemnere mundana omnia.

Ante somnum revolve omnia dicta & facta præteritæ diei.

Hoc solemniter faciendum semel in septimo die in scriptis.

Diem dominicum in animam tuam totum impende.

Sacra cœna sæpius & devoté sumenda.

Ardenti prece quælibet dies claudenda.

Thus translated.

The ENCHIRIDION of Dr. THO. COMBER :

Or, Rules of pious Life and Conversation, extracted from the writings of Dr. Tho. Comber, Dean of Durham.

Let pious thoughts employ your mind each morn,

And cherish them—like infants newly born.

The various business of the present day

Consider calmly and serenely weigh.

Your soul be careful to adorn and arm

With prayer, which fervent is and also warm.

The charms of sin most carefully avoid,

And its occasions, lest you be decoy'd.

Your

Your solitary thoughts and social speech,
 Tow'rds things divine should primarily reach,
 Then for your own and others good you'll preach. }
 No opportunity of doing good
 Should be omitted, much less be withstood.
 In meditating on your death (if wise)
 You'll learn all things terrestrial to despise.
 Before your eyes are clos'd with sleep well weigh
 The words and actions of the late past day;
 And once a week a memorandum make
 In writing of what's past, for memory's sake.
 The sabbath day you wholly should employ
 To your soul's good, and 'twill procure you joy.
 The holy supper of the Lord should be
 Partaken of devoutly, frequently.
 Let every day which passes o'er your head,
 Be clos'd with fervent prayer for daily bread.

P. 86, l. 14.—Having staid in Kent, &c.

During this visit he preached twice at his native place, on
 the 20th of June and 4th of July, and, by great good luck the
 skeleton of one of these sermons is preserved. As the reader
 may, probably, be gratified with seeing a specimen of the
very few sermon notes of Dr. Comber which have come down
 to these times, here follows as much of his sermon preached on
 the 4th of July as he committed to paper.

Mr. Comber, at Westerham, July 4th, 1675.

Matt. vii. 12.

The blessed Jesus divides our whole duty into two parts,
 Matt. xxii. 39. 1st, Our duty to God; 2dly, To our neigh-
 bour. Of the 1st, piety to God, you were instructed from
 Daniel's devotions, and the 2d cannot be learned in less room
 than this sentence, Whatsoever, &c. Which excellent rule
 hath

hath been made illustrious by the sufferings of the Jews, consent of the Gentiles, &c. but especially in that Jesus himself hath adopted it as the sum of christianity, and proposed it here as the foundation of justice and charity. Let us therefore consider it in four parts.

1st. An introduction, "Therefore, &c." 2d. A supposition, "We should, &c." 3d. An inference, "Whatsoever, &c." 4th, A motive to enforce it, "For this, &c."

1st. The introduction, "Therefore," which seems to be the *use* of all, and the epitome of what went before, as Eccles. xii. 13. or else it respects v. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Since you must ask all of a good and gracious God, *be just*, and do *not disoblige him*. Lam. iii. 41. and imitate him you worship. Give as he gives: do to others as he, &c. You ask of God and he gives; of man and you expect to receive, "Therefore, &c."

2d. The supposition, "We would, &c."

3d. The inference, "We ought, &c. and to this best rule of practice, 1st. In general, 2d. In particular, it is the foundation of *justice*, in *relative duties* in 5th commandment, in absolute duties in 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th commandments, of *charity*, &c.

Use of exhortation, &c.

1. To shew their error who lay all religion in justice.
2. The easiness, reasonableness, and advantage of christianity.
3. To exhort all to do it.

P. 90, l. 19.—Great favour with Charles II.
&c.

This very favour a few years afterwards made him obnoxious to the parliament; and being impeached by the House of Commons, was committed to the Tower of London, by the House of Lords: he remained in that confinement several years, but at last was admitted to bail, and discharged on the 12th of February, 1683, on entering into a recognizance of 10,000l. to answer the articles of impeachment when called on.

P. 107,

P. 107, l. 23.—The additional praise of a very uncommon modesty.

Among the number of great scholars who might have taken their doctor of divinity's degree at the university, with credit to themselves, but accepted it at the hands of archbishops of Canterbury, we may reckon that prodigy of learning *William Wotton*, who at five years of age, read *Greek, Latin, and Hebrew*.

P. 129, l. 7.—Named *Alice, &c.*

This daughter became very justly a great favourite with her father, who gave her an excellent education and very considerable fortune: she was a lady of a first-rate understanding, and of singular piety; was twice married, and had issue by each husband.

1. FRANCIS BLACKBURNE, of *Richmond*, in the north-riding of the county of *York*, *gent.* was her first husband, by whom she had issue two sons, Francis and Thomas, and one daughter, Jane.

1. Francis Blackburne, M. A. late Archdeacon of Cleveland, and rector of Richmond, in the north-riding of the county of York, their eldest son, married Mrs. Esworth, relict of ——— Esworth, by whom he had issue, *Francis, William, Sarah*.—*Francis Blackburne, M. A.* vicar of *Brignall*, in the north-riding of the county of *York*, their eldest son, has been twice married, and hath several children. *William Blackburne, M. D.* their second son, married *Hannah Wilson*, daughter of *William Wilson*, of *Ayton*, near *Gisborough, Yorkshire*, formerly captain of an *East Indiaman*, by whom he has two daughters, *Rachael Elizabeth*, and *Dorothea-Frances*, and one son, *William Theophilus*.—*Sarah Blackburne* married the *Rev. John Hall*, vicar of *Chew-Magna*, in the county of *Somerset*, by whom she has three children, *Hannah-Mary, Sarah*, and *Theophila*.

2. Thomas Blackburne, their second son, died at Christ-college, Cambridge, unmarried.

3. Jane

3. Jane Blackburne, their only daughter, married Sir Onesiphorus Paul, of Wood-chester, in the county of Gloucester, bart*. by whom she had issue one son, *George Onesiphorus*, and two daughters, *Jane* and *Elizabeth*. *Sir George Onesiphorus Paul*, their only son, is the present baronet, and is at present unmarried. *Jane Paul*, their eldest daughter, was married to *Thomas Pettat*, of *Stanby Park*, in the county of *Gloucester*, esq; by whom she has no issue. *Elizabeth Paul*, their second daughter, was married to *George Snow*, of *Langton*, in the county of *Dorset*, esq; by whom she left issue one son, *Robert*, and one daughter, *Jane*. *Robert Snow*, esq; their only son, is a captain in the *Westminster Militia*, and at present unmarried. *Jane Snow*, their only daughter, married *James Clitherow*, esq; colonel of the *Westminster Militia*, by whom at present she has no issue.

2. WILLIAM KIRKBY, late of Kirkby and Ashlocke, in the county of Derby, esq; was the dean's daughter's second husband, by whom she left issue three sons, William-Comber, James, and John, and one daughter, Sarah.

William-Comber Kirkby, their eldest son, married, and left one son, and one daughter. James Kirkby, their second son, married, but left no issue. John and Sarah died unmarried.

* See "*Baronetage of England*," article "*Paul, of Redborough*." In this article the laborious and ingenious editors of the "*English Baronetage*," have two errata, the one where the present baronet is styled "*Sir Onesiphorus, &c.*" instead of *Sir George Onesiphorus, &c.* the other, where Jane, daughter of the late baronet is said to be married to "*Thomas Pattat, &c.*" instead of *Thomas Pettat, &c.* The editor of these memoirs, perfectly sensible how greatly his own performance will require the indulgence of the candid reader, is far from pointing out these errors, in so useful and laborious a work as the "*Baronetage of England*," with a malicious or ill-natured intention, he is merely desirous of rectifying those mistakes, which his better information enables him to do, for the use of those whom it may concern, and thinks they are sufficiently excused by the difficulties attending so arduous an undertaking.

The Rev. William Betham, of Stonham Aspel, Suffolk, is said to entertain a design of publishing a new *Baronetage*, which the considerable addition to the list of baronets since the publication of the one now extant renders very necessary. See "*Literary Memoirs of Living Authors*," vol. i. p. 52.

P. 130, l. 10.—“*Historical Vindication of the divine Right, &c.*”

The compilers of the Biog. Brit. unjustly ascribe this book to the *Dean of Carlisle*, being probably led into the mistake by considering *he* was much nearer to *Mr. Selden's* time than the *Dean of Durham*.

P. 137, l. 6.—Composed a very pathetic elegy, &c.

No! no! 'tis vain to think grief will be pent
 Within the breast; these passions must have vent;
 Were I denied a tear, my heart would break,
 And losers surely may have leave to speak.
 I've lost in this my *dear* and *only* son
 More than e'er mortal man did lose in *one*;
 Sweet nature, lovely features, sprightly wit,
 Obliging converse, graces that would fit
 Much riper years, discretion, courtesy,
 Submissive meakness, great humility;
 Most fervent piety, for he'd ne'er pass
 Day without prayer, or meal without a grace;
 So that without a tongue this babe did tell
 He *fear'd his God* and *lov'd his Saviour* well.
 Grave and devout, with lift-up hands and eyes
 He offer'd up his daily sacrifice;
 As if his heav'n-born soul did then forsee
 His near approaching immortality.
 His voice, it was the music of the spheres!
 A sweeter never charm'd a father's ears.
 Above all earthly things this child did love
 Music, the joy of blessed souls above.
 He could have learn'd to speak; but did refuse
 To get that language he was not to use.
 Being chosen for the choir of heav'n's great king,
 Before he learn'd to *speak*, he learn'd to *sing*.

He

He was all-heavenly while he lived here,
 Design'd at first to fill an higher sphere.
 No anger in his dove-like soul did live,
 Loath to offend, and ready to forgive;
 He did deserve the love of all; and yet,
 As if he did his merit quite forget,
 None could *more generous or more grateful* be
 To those that did him the least courtesy.
 Though a weak body, his great soul oppress'd,
 This did but bring his patience to the test.
 Had but the world been worthy of his stay,
 If we may judge by this bright morning ray,
 The wond'rous glories of his noon-day sun,
 When all these hopes had to perfection run,
 He might have prov'd, as we may well presage,
 One of the great examples of the age.
 But since 'twas so unlikely he could make
 This wretched world reform, God pleas'd to take
 Him from it, 'ere we did his brightness stain,
 Whose virtues had, alas! been shew'd in vain.
 'Tis true our heav'nly father takes no more
 Than what his bounty lent to us before;
 And 'tis the little angel's mighty gain,
 To live and sing where God doth ever reign.
 Yet to his earthly parents such a cross
 Commands their tears for this most heavy loss;
 Stripp'd of their comfort, of their hopes bereft,
 No wonder if they be in mourning left.

P. 156, l. 10.—To conciliate the minds of the people, &c.

A letter from our author to a gentleman, the initials of whose name are C. W. seems to have been written about this time. He therein strenuously exhorts his correspondent not to go into the violent measures of those, who would have the *Exclusion-*

Bill or nothing. He has some expressions in this letter which shew how far many real Protestants went, who yet would not join in pushing the *Exclusion-Bill*. “If he (the Duke of York) have aspired,” says he, “by attempts on his and our sovereign’s life, to attain the crown by treasonable practices, I shall make *no doubt* but he hath *forfeited* his *birth-right*; and if that can be made out by *plain proofs*, no honest Protestant would question the equity of excluding him. Yet I will assure you, I could wish there were any *honest way* of preventing a *popish successor*; and, if the King will join with his parliament therein, I shall make no great question about the validity thereof, &c.” And again, “If we cannot take the gates, let us get two or three advantageous posts, &c.” Then he mentions the securities which the King had offered, and seems, under providence, to depend on the hope of the Duke of York’s coming very old to the throne, and his heirs being protestant. He is strongly against what he calls a *wild toleration* of all sects of Protestants, some of whom, he thinks, differ almost as much from each other, as from the Papists. By the initials of the gentleman’s name, to whom this letter is addressed, and his reference to the sufferings of his family in the *great rebellion*, and to his motto and crest*, it seems to have been *Sir Christopher Wandesford*.

P. 159, l. 4.—A very severe satiric copy of verses, &c.

Accursed brood of bloody Catiline!
 Who viper-like did cruelly combine
 To tear the bowels of your guiltless mother,
 What rhetoric can cloke, what art can smother
 Your bloody principles? Your *Roman* blood
 Tells us your actions still shall make it good.
 We know your very families: we find
 You are of *Sylla’s* and of *Nero’s* kind.

* The crest is A CHURCH, the motto, “*Tout pour l’église* ;”—All for the church.

Rome's walls were first with bloody mortar rear'd,
 And have been since with murders still repair'd.
 Lest *eighty-eight* and th'horrid *powder plot*,
 By our kind charity should be forgot,
 Our mem'ry's refresh'd with new designs,
 And providence hath *once more* sprung your mines.
 This hellish plot hath rubb'd that old deep sore,
 Which scarce was skinned over well before ;
 And now we see 'twas want of *power*, not *will* ;
 'Twas 'cause you *could not*, that you *did not* kill
 Our *King*, our *priests*, our *people*. You inherit
 Your father's *lands*, their *errors*, and their *spirit*.
 Old *Faux's* crew are dead ; but though the *name*
 Be chang'd, 'tis plain your *manners* are the same :
 Oppression was the then pretended cause ;
 The *maiden Queen's* and *peaceful King's* strict laws,
 E'en forc'd you to rebel against your will,
 Who say, " You to a *gentle prince* are *loyal* still."
 Daring *hypocrisy* ! whose brazen brow
 Is stranger to a blush ; can we allow
 Thy open falsehoods to pass uncontroul'd ?
 And shall we think them *true* because they're *bold* ?
 What *gentler prince* did ever fill this throne ?
 Was ever *more indulgence* to you shewn ?
 Your liberties, your honours, and your lands,
 You quietly enjoy'd in your own hands :
 Though you enjoy'd them, yet this will not do,
 Your own suffices not, you'll have *our's* too.
 Base, greedy minds, will nothing kindness call ?
 You think you've *nothing* if you have not *all*.
 And did you not resolve this King should feel
 The barb'rous point of your unhallow'd steel ?
 But pistols, daggers, poisons, he shall find,
 That unto your inhuman sect is kind.

The late *usurping tyrant* by petition
 You flatter'd much, when, like a politician,
 He rul'd you with an iron rod : but now
 Your sov'reign's mercy doth too-plainly shew,
 Your sect from that ungrateful serpent springs
 Which *nipp'd* with cold is *quiet* ; *warmed, stings*
 The courteous breast that cherish'd it ; 'twill wound
 The too-kind soul that took it from the ground.
 And now ungrateful monsters can the age
 Forbear to vent upon you all its rage ?
 Can treachery be trusted ? Is it reason
 Kings murders should permit base plots and treason ?
 Do not your crimes awake the penal laws ?
 Can you complain of those ills which you cause ?
 'Tis a just law that they who death invent,
 Should of their art make first experiment !

P. 163, l. 13.—As his noble patron Lord Frescheville was dead, &c.

His lordship was the son of *Sir Peter Frescheville*, of *Staveley*, in *Derbyshire*, knt. by *Joice*, daughter of *Sir Miles Fleetwood*, of London, knt. and widow of *Sir Hewet Osborne*, of *Kiveton*, in the west-riding of the county of *York*, bart.—See Dr. Comber's "*Memoirs of Lord Deputy Wandesford*," p. 21. Cadell, London, 1778.

Though his lordship lived to a very extended age, he seems to have left no male issue, and the barony appears to have been extinct at his lordship's death, in the year 1682.—See extinct peerage.

P. 167, l. 3.—Without *owning his mistakes*, or *excusing his reflexions*, &c.

The Marquis of Halifax in drawing the character of Dr. Burnet has these words : " He is not quicker in *discerning* other men's

men's *faults* than he is in *forgiving them*; so ready, or rather glad to *acknowledge his own*, that from *blemishes* they become *ornaments*. All the repeated provocations of his indecent adversaries had no other effect than the setting his *good-nature* in so much *better light*, since *his anger never yet went farther than to pity them*." It is not a little difficult to reconcile the noble marquis's character of Dr. B. as above, with the account which is given of his conduct in this controversy!!

P. 190, l. 3.—Publishing an epitome of his book on the Common Prayer, &c.

This is dedicated to the *Princess Anne*, and begins with an eulogium on *Charles II.* for educating her in the protestant religion. 'Tis remarkable that this dedication wrote in the reign of *Charles II.* should not be published till that of *James II.* who was the most violent enemy to protestantism that had for a long time sat on the throne.

P. 200, l. 6.—Named William, &c.

This son having finished a private school education under the *Rev. Joseph Midgley, M. A.* at *Thirsk*, in the north-riding of the county of *York*, was admitted commoner of *Lincoln-College, Oxford*, under the tuition of the *Rev. Mr. Morley, M. A.* but fell into a consumption, and leaving the university, soon after died at his mother's house at *Usebourne*. He was buried within the communion rails, on the north-side of the altar, at *Stonegrave church*, and a brass plate, with a short inscription to his memory, was placed over him by the editor's grandfather, who succeeded him in the estate.

P. 206, l. 15.—His "*Discourse concerning Excommunication*," &c.

There is in this discourse one passage which seems *not to be the fittest* for the time at which he published it; it is an *appro-*

bation of *passive obedience*, as follows: “*St. Ambrose* did then offer to suffer quietly, if the Emperor would oppose his sentence: nor did he pretend either to *use force against him*, or to *allow any to do so*.” Our author had far too much sense to retail that miraculous sanction of excommunication, viz. an arian bishop’s tongue swelled as often as he attempted to act as bishop, without adding, IF IT BE TRUE.—See J. Wesley’s account of a clergyman’s hoarseness, in his Journal. Our author maintains, that a churchman’s right to *excommunicate*, (just as to *preach, pray, or administer the sacraments*,) is divine, but its exercise as to circumstances, depends on the prince. Yet may not the prince’s injunction as to circumstances be such as effectually to destroy any *essential benefit* from this right? Do not the principles of the “*Alliance, &c.*” explain this point, and they only?

P. 211, l. 5.—Named Mary, &c.

This lady, when very young, married the Rev. THOMAS BROOKE, M. A. rector of *Richmond*, in *Yorkshire*, by whom she had several children of both sexes, though only two of them left issue, viz. 1. *William*, 2. *Anne*.

1. *William Brooke*, M. D. of *Field-head*, in the *west-riding* of the county of *York*, married *Alice Marwood*, of an ancient family, (and doubly related on her mother’s side to the celebrated ALEXANDER POPE,) by whom he had issue, 1. *William*, 2. *John-Charles*, 3. *Mary*, 4. *Margaret*, 5. *Jane*.

William Brooke, esq; the eldest son, now resides at *Wakefield*, in *Yorkshire*, has been twice married, and has three children living, all unmarried, viz. 1. *Jane*, 2. *Thomas*, 3. *Margaret*. *John-Charles Brooke*, the second son, died unmarried. *Mary Brooke*, the eldest daughter, married A. D. 1763, *Thomas Comber*, L. L. D. by whom she has issue five children, as will hereafter be particularly mentioned. *Margaret Brooke*, the second daughter, is unmarried. *Jane Brooke*, the youngest daughter, married *Richard Horton Briscoe*, esq; deceased, by whom she has no issue.

2. *Anne*

2. *Anne Brooke*, married *Richard Fenton*, of *Banktop*, in the *west-riding* of the county of *York*, *esq*; by whom she had issue several children, one only of whom left issue, viz. *Mary*. *Mary Fenton* married *Sir William Wake**, of *Courteen-Hall*, county of *Northampton*, *bart*. by whom she has issue two sons, *William* and *Richard-William*, and two daughters, *Marianne* and *Charlotte*. *Sir William Wake*, the present baronet, has been twice married, and has four children. First wife, *Mary*, daughter of *Francis Hust Sitwell*, *esq*; by whom he has issue one son, *Charles*. Second wife *Jane*, daughter of the late *Admiral Gambier*, by whom he has three children, *Louisa*, *William*, *Drury*. The younger son of the late *Sir W. Wake*, and his two daughters are at present unmarried.

The taste of these times delighted much in anagram and acrostic, and there is extant among the dean's papers, the following verses made upon his name, as an acrostic, which shew his piety in so striking a light, that it is hoped their merit will be a sufficient excuse for their insertion.

T o thee, my great creator, I must give
H onour and glory every day I live.
O Lord ! thy mercies many are and great,
M y soul and body thou hast made compleat ;
A ll choice of education I have had,
S ometimes my fortune's low, but never bad :
C hoice my companions, bountiful my friends,
O bliging my dear wife, without self-ends ;
M y calling high and holy, yet a pleasure ;
B lessings I have of all kinds without measure ;
E ase, health, and friends, enough of worldly store ;
R eceive my soul at last, I ask no more.

* See "*Baronetage of England*," p. 228. In the preceding pages of this article many interesting particulars, together with the marriages and descents of this very ancient family, are given.

P. 255, l. 11.—Having in like manner been tempted by popish emissaries, &c.

Probably about this time our author wrote the following copy of verses on the temptations which clergymen of the church of England had to comply with the attempts of popish counsellors.

Lately I heard a penfive swain,
 Who fed his flock on *Albion's* plain,
 Thus sighing to himself complain:
 My fence is levell'd with the ground,
 The wolves my dear-bought flocks surround,
 While my poor hands, alas! are bound.
 My sheep-hook's gone, my dogs lie still,
 The sheep may wander where they will,
 And I must not redress the ill.
 If I oppose the spoil, I see,
 They will *suspend* the *laws* and *me*,
 Whilst they that rob me go quite free.
 I must not credit what I hear,
 And, though my danger's *great* and *near*,
 'Tis *petty treason* if I fear.
 But that which wounds me still *more deep*,
 Is, that to these I now must *creep*,
 Who *scatter* and *devour* my sheep.
 Some of my neighbour swains that pawn
 Their *honour* for a piece of *lawn*,
 Do urge me to *make legs* and *fawn*.
 But when this flattery turns to hate,
 Then he that trusts them will too late
 Repent his most unhappy fate!

P. 258, l. 18.—A second "*Declaration, &c.*"

Among our author's manuscripts is found a paper, entitled "*Queries on the Declaration of James II. 1688.*" It contains fifteen

fifteen masterly queries to shew the fatal tendency of that *Declaration*. In the same paper are fourteen queries addressed to *W. Pen* and *H. C.* on the *universal toleration* proposed. In another manuscript of our author are found “*Three Considerations addressed to W. P. concerning the Security of his new Mag. Ch. for Liberty of Conscience, &c.*” Under these three general heads of considerations, are hints plainly designed to have been enlarged into a regular discourse. The first consideration is concerning the *dispensing power*, which will render null all *new* as well as *old laws*: the second is of the *High Commission Court*, which can suspend *W. P. &c.* as well as the *Bishop of London, &c.* the third is of a *standing army* to be used like that in France. It appears that our author actually enlarged upon these hints, for all these are *closely and strongly pursued* in a printed half-sheet among his manuscripts, though without a name.

There occur also among his papers “*Ten Queries touching the Quakers Pretences to the Spirit of God.*” The following is the conclusion of them: “These considerations should make the Quakers quit their *false pretences to miraculous inspiration*, and leaving off their sinful schism, come in and join themselves with the true and sober Protestants; that, with united endeavours, we may all seek to preserve the *fundamentals of our religion*, which the Papists would utterly overthrow, together with our government and lives also.”

It was probably about this time the dean wrote a piece intitled, “*Christian Counsel to moderate Dissenters.*” He begins with giving himself (in order to gain their benevolent attention) the following character, which has such connexion with these memoirs, as to be a sufficient reason for subjoining it. “I am,” says, he “one of those who have seen and heard the ways of worship before the restoration of King Charles II. and *after deliberation* have complied with the *establishments of the church*, and have made it the business of a studious life to enquire into the grounds of them, which I find *so primitive, so rational, and so necessary*

necessary, as to make me a strict and thorough *conformist* in all things to which I have subscribed. Yet I have carried myself always with that tenderness to dissenters, that after I had tried by arguments to persuade them that prejudice hindered their success, (as I praise God in many cases it did not,) I resolved to live in *charity* with them; and though my station and interest gave me power to prosecute them *by law*, I never used that power, and can challenge all mankind to disprove me. I have by my *preaching* and *writing* laboured to stem the tide of *POPERY* and *ARBITRARY POWER* when it was most dangerous so to do, &c."

Having remarked the present danger to all *Protestants* from the conspiracy of the *Papists* to extirpate what they call *heresy*, he proposes to consider, first, the *sin*, and then the *scandal*, and lastly the *danger of separation*: also to compare the many things in which *established* and *tolerated Protestants* agree, and the few in which they disagree, and to draw some conclusions to effect an *union*. He hath executed all these excellently, except drawing the conclusions, which seems to be the most important of all.

Before dismissing this topic it may be proper to remark that the author of an excellent publication, in the year 1798, intitled "*A Guide to the Church*," hath, among many other interesting points, some sensible reflexions on "*liberty of conscience, toleration, and right of private judgment* in religious matters," in p. 120, *et sequen.* The whole of the above work is well worth the serious attention of Christians of every denomination.

P. 264, l. 21.—Was immediately struck out of the commission of the peace.

The able and industrious authors of the "*Baronetage of England, &c.*" in the article "*Sir Coplestone Bampfild*," justly consider it as "*an honour* to have been turned out of the commission of the peace, in King James II.'s reign;" and observe that

that “ *a great many other LOYAL GENTLEMEN were turned out at that time, as well as Sir Coplestone.*” See *English Baronetage*, vol. i. p. 379.

P. 264, l. 26.—*Answers to these three famous questions, &c.*

To the first question, I am incapable of being elected a member of parliament by reason of my being in holy orders.

To the second, If at any time I shall concern myself about the election of parliament men, it shall be for such persons as I have reason to believe are *truly loyal* to his majesty, and *intirely faithful* to the interests of government in *church* and *state*, as now *by law established*.

To the third, I always did, and by the grace of God, always will live *peaceably*; and, as my sacred office obliges me, will endeavour to persuade others so to do.

(Signed)

THO. COMBER.

A true copy of the answer which I delivered by the order, and in the name of Dr. Tho. Comber, to the three questions propounded by *Sir Walter Vavasour* and *Mr. Middleton* of Stockhill, August 25th, 1688. WILLIAM STAINFORTH.

P. 265, l. 2.—Elegant copy of verses, &c.

These verses assume the form of an *allegory*, or *fable*, as follows:

A *royal eagle**, famous, in his youth,
For courage, generosity, and truth,
Loses this honour as he older grows,
By keeping company with *carrion crows* †;
Who guide his motions, and stir all the game,
Mark out his prey, and always give him aim;
And when he *strikes*, that is their lucky hour,
To share the prey, to pillage, and devour.

* King James II. † Popish Priests.

The

'The *noble peacocks** are disgrac'd and check'd,
 And with their stately plumes *base jays*† are deck'd.
 The *reverend magpies*‡, who had help'd to raise
 This *eagle* to his perch, in those sad days,
 Are quarrell'd with, secur'd, arraign'd, and try'd,
 But gold and innocence will fire abide.
 The *lesser blackbirds*§, whose melodious throats
 Had tun'd the winged choir to loyal notes,
 Must faction spread, must Roman rights restore,
 Or be forbid to whistle any more.
 The *loyal pheasants*|| lose the eagle's grace,
 And every where are turned out of place,
 Because they would not take away that law
 Which wisely keeps the ravenous birds in awe.
 The crows had spy'd a *goodly feather'd nest***,
 Where silver swans on *Isis*' banks did rest,
 They make the eagle seize this wealthy place,
 And, without law or trial in the case,
 The harmless swans are banish'd and made poor,
 While birds of prey enjoy this ill-got store.
 'Tis said to be the *eagle's* full intent,
 To call the birds to a *free parliament* :
 If so, he'll find all generous birds agree
 Humbly to beg he will not tamely see
 His winged subjects made a prey to such
 As care not who have *little* so they've *much* :
 And 'till he hang the rooks, and crows, and jays,
 We *must not, cannot* hope for better days.

P. 265, l. 6.—Another *severe satyric copy of verses, &c.*

Though deafness, as *a natural infirmity*, is not certainly a proper subject for satire, yet, when it is considered as *a divine*

* The Peers. † Roman Catholics. ‡ The Bishops. § Inferior Clergy.
 || Protestants. ** Magdalen College.

punishment for public crimes, and, as it disqualifies a man afflicted with it for sitting as a judge, it then seems very allowable in our satirist.

The LOYAL SEQUESTERATOR.

Poets have feign'd, and painters have design'd
 JUSTICE with cover'd eyes as being blind;
 But he doth well deserve to lose his ears,
 Who doth pretend "she's deaf and never hears."
 Closely to stop one ear seems very fit,
 While the fierce plaintiff stiffly argues it.
 But when dame JUSTICE hears of neither side,
 Woe be to him whose cause she does decide.
 Then how should he our grievances redress,
 Who is *as deaf* as he is *merciless*!
 In vain Baal's worshippers do cry and roar,
 In vain their senseless idol they implore.
 This *stupid image* now as little hears,
 "We must both tell our tale and find him ears!"
 While he had use of ears he did despise
 Sequester'd widows, and poor orphans cries:
 Which crime to *law* that *forfeiture* did make,
 That righteous heav'n doth now see fit to take:
 And is it just in our new parliament,
 To make his *due reward* our *punishment*?

In the same book the above subject is treated in different metre, as follows:

Painters have well design'd
 Impartial *Justice* blind;
 But no bold fancy dares
 Pretend she hath no ears.
 One ear she stops indeed,
 'Till the defendant plead.
 But he that must our cause decide
 Is deaf, and hears of neither side.

"My

“ My case is very hard,” one swears,

“ To tell my tale and find him ears.”

Sequester'd widows cries,

Of old he did despise ;

For which just heav'n, they say,

Hath ta'en his sense away.

And must the injur'd trudge,

For right, to such a judge ?

Ye pow'rs revenge this partial choice,

And let him also lose his voice ;

So he'll no more his brethren awe,

With *puns*, *false Latin*, and *false law*.

He understands no case,

Yet hath so braz'd a face,

He will determine all,

And still goes on to bawl,

“ Till the whole company

Become as deaf as he.

Then strike him out of all commissions,

And let not one of his conditions,

E'er have it in his power to *lurch*

The *citizens*, or *wrong* the *church*.

P. 266, l. 24. — Called *Thomas*, &c.

This son was educated first under a private tutor, *Dr. Johnson*, prebendary of *Durham*, at home, and then under the *Rev. Joseph Midgley* at *Thirsk*, and after his death, at a great free-school at *Ripon* : from thence he was removed to *Oxford*, being admitted commoner of *Lincoln-College*, A. D. 1708, under *Dr. Lupton*, but ill health obliged him to leave the university before he took a degree. Partly from a delicate habit of body, inclining to a consumption, and inconsistent with a close application to study, and partly from an innate modesty, which induced him to think he should not appear to advantage in the pulpit after so eminent a father, he declined taking holy orders, and resided chiefly at his

his seat at East-Newton, where he acted as *a justice of the peace, deputy lieutenant, &c.* until his death which happened May 12th, 1765, a few weeks after the birth of his eldest grandson, *the editor of these memoirs.*

THOMAS COMBER, the dean's second son, and heir (on the death of his elder brother William) on the 1st of January, 1717, married ANNE MICKLETHWAITE, relict of the Rev. ELIAS MICKLETHWAITE, rector of *Gilling*, and daughter of the Rev. ANDREW WILSON, vicar of *Easingwold*, in the north-riding of the county of *York*, by whom he had issue three sons, 1. Thomas, 2. William, 3. Andrew, and one daughter, who died an infant.

1. Thomas Comber, L. L. D. late rector of Buckworth and Morbourne, in the county of Huntingdon, their eldest son, married Mary Brooke, eldest daughter of William Brooke, M.D. late of Fieldhead, in the west-riding of the county of York, by whom he left issue four sons, viz. 1. *Thomas*, 2. *Duncombe*, 3. *William-Turner*, 4. *Andrew*, and one daughter, *Anne*. Thomas Comber, A. B. (the editor of these memoirs) married Elizabeth Coote, third daughter of John Coote, of *Hampstead*, near London, gent. by whom he has issue, *Harriet*, *Charlotte*, and *Henry-George-Wandesford*. *Duncombe*, *William-Turner*, and *Andrew*, are unmarried; *Anne Comber* married *William Hood*, of London, merchant, by whom she has issue three sons and three daughters.

2. William Comber, M. A. vicar of Kirkby-Moor-side, in the north-riding of the county of York, married Dorothy Arbuthnot, sole heir of James Arbuthnot, of the island of Antigua, esq; by whom he has no issue.

3. Andrew Comber died in his father's life-time, unmarried.

P. 273, l. 21.—About this time he published, &c.

The first thing which came out in support of the new government, was a pamphlet by Dr. Burnet, (who was promoted to

the see of Salisbury, “before King William had been many *days* on the throne,”) entitled “*An Enquiry into the present State of Affairs,*” wherein King James II. was considered as *a deserter of the crown*: an answer to it soon came out by Mr. Jeremy Collier, with the title “*The Desertion discussed, in a Letter to a Country Gentleman.*” This reply gave such offence that Mr. Collier was seized and sent to Newgate, where he continued a close prisoner, but was at length discharged without being brought to a trial. See Biog. Dict. vol. iii. p. 372.

P. 288, l. 22.—“*Verses on the Campaign in Ireland,*” &c.

TO THE KING.

Welcome to longing *Britain's* happy shore!
The winds and waves that fan and waft thee o'er,
In thee to us all blessings do restore.

Triumphant laurels are thy right,
He's *overcome* that *dares not* fight,
This hero doth *monsieur* outbrave,
And stops to his *ambition* gave,
Who hop'd all *Europe* to enslave.

P. 305, l. 1.—“*In Praise of Female Modesty.*”

1.

How winning are those charming looks!
How conquering that face,
Where *modesty* to *beauty* gives
A sweet and pow'rful grace!

2.

The spotless white of such a soul,
Turns to a guiltless blush,
When a rude *word*, or *look*, or *thought*,
Presumes to make a push.

3. Honour

3.

Honour is *virtue's* surest ground,
 And *innocence* still fears
 Some unknown guilt should chance to stain
 Its *heart*, its *eye*, or *ears*.

4.

Love borrows all his shafts from such
 Sweet, harmless, killing eyes,
 By which he wounds the hearts of all
 The *virtuous*, *brave*, and *wise*.

5.

Those hate the fairest of the sex,
 Whose *impudence* doth shew,
 Their *virtue* they not to their *will*,
 But want of tempting owe.

6.

The debauchees may swear and vow
 They love them as their lives,
 Because they *misses* only court,
 Not *virtuous*, *faithful* *wives*.

P. 305, l. 2.—“*In Praise of King William.*”

Victorious WILLIAM, wonder of this age,
 That hast so bravely check'd a tyrant's rage;
 Restor'd our laws, religion, liberty,
 And nobly set three sinking nations free;
 How art thou paid for *perils*, *pains*, and *cost*,
 By those who thought *they and their rights* were lost!
 Princes of old were heroes made and gods,
 For rescuing subjects from the iron rods
 Of cruel tyranny; but thou art painted
 As black as *hell*, for that for which they're fainted.
 But, maugre this, go on, great soul, to run
 The glorious course thou hast so well begun;
 The misty fogs daunt not the rising sun!

}

Slander's the last resort of feeble spite !
 Those dogs most fiercely bark that dare not bite.
 Thy *justice* in the throne, success in field,
 Must make them unto *shame* and *thee* to yield :
 Or, if they still prove spiteful and unjust,
 Thou may'st thy *fame* to *future ages* trust.

P. 305, l. 20.—On the subject of the
French invasion, &c.

In one of his pocket books is the following copy of verses,
 which seem plainly to allude to this attempt of the French, in
 favour of King James.

While plodding K. J. raises cross-beams,
 For that *new engine* which he dreams
 Will make *Thames* mix with *Tiber's* streams ;
 The angry *Thames* complains to *Po**,
 Whose mighty waters deep though flow,
 J. and his engines soon o'erflow.
 And if *great Po* and *Thames* advance
 Their conquering waves to cruel France,
 K. L. to the same tune must dance.

The following verses, in the same little pocket-book, evi-
 dently appear to have a political meaning.

IRIS and CORYDON†.

If much merit oblige, or fair promises bind,
 Then to *Corydon Iris* must ever be kind.
 Her father he served, and stuck to her brother,
 He fought for the one, and supported the other ;

* By *Po* is probably meant the Emperor of Germany ; the rest is easy.

† By *Corydon* is probably meant *the pastors of the church of England* ; by *Iris*,
the Court of England ; and the above piece, in all probability, was written in
 the reign of James II. when that unhappy King flattered the *dissenters*, and find-
 ing them unable to serve the court effectually, just before the revolution, flat-
 tered the *church of England clergy*.

And

And when she fell heir,
By his pains and his care,
She quietly settled that great affair.

2.

She promis'd him often, and solemnly swore,
That nothing but death should e'er break the amour;
But when the wind turn'd, she caress'd then his foes,
And her favours on them she profusely bestows.

It was *Corydon's* lot
To be scorn'd and forgot,
'Till unlook'd for intrigues new measures begot.

3.

Upon this the wise lady soon faces about,
Laments her old friends whom before she did flout:
Ye am'rous critics, who study the case,
Declare whether now he should bate her an *ace*;

'Till he be secure
Her friendship is sure,
For twice to be baffled no flesh can endure.

P. 314, l 3.—A fragment of some *flowing*
verses, &c.

Painter once more thy pencil take,
And in dark shade draw *Lethe-lake* !
Draw the false bishop, worst of men !
The *Proteus* viscount, father *Pen*,
Draw *Ashton*, *Elliot*, and the rout
Of Jacobites, the banks about,
Who drink of those forgetful streams,
Feeding on cruel hopes and dreams ;
Of restoration of King *James*,
Yea fail not to record their names.
Suppose them all to have forgot
The reign, which was but one weak plot

To blow up all our rights and laws,
 And set up holy father's cause?
 Apostacy from the true faith,
 Dissembling in whate'er he saith;
 His thirst for arbitrary sway,
 And all the facts that look'd that way;
 The *High Commission*, *Magdalen case*,
 Vows to extirpate her'tic race;
 Our friends thrust out, our foes put in,
 Tricks to put by the next of kin,
 Whole shoals of priests invited over,
 The mass display'd without a cover.

* * * * *

P. 314, l. 7.—“*Verses on the Retaking of Namur,*” &c.

Let fame's loud trumpet all around proclaim
 Our mighty hero's never-dying name!
 Whose glorious success by sea and land,
 Has put th'astonish'd *monsieur* to a stand.
Boufflers is baffled: *Villeroy* look'd on,
 Whilst *Namur*, thought invincible, is won.
 “AMAT VICTORIA TESTES,” was his word,
 Which must be now writ on *King WILLIAM's sword*;
 Whose conduct and whose valour, will in story
 Vastly outshine great *Lewis's* feign'd glory.

P. 319, l. 21.—Having answered this seditious production, &c.

The title given to this little piece, was “*The Protestant Mask taken off from the Jesuited Englishman: or, An Answer to Great Britain's just Complaint, &c.*” and the evil designs of those who had assumed the language of discontented Protestants to cover their base designs, is very severely and justly exposed therein.

P. 343,

P. 343, l. 23.—“ *Elegy on the Death of Mary II. Queen of England.*”

Here England's choicest blessing lately stood,
 MARY the great, the gracious, and the good;
 Of whom no more is left to mortal eyes,
 But the cold tombstone's comfortless *HERE LIES!*
 Admiring angels guard her through the spheres,
 While three poor kingdoms melt away in tears.
 Friends, strangers, yea e'en foes put mourning on,
 As if with her all joy from earth were gone.
 The hero King that never shrunk before,
 At smoke or blood, fearless while cannons roar,
 He faints and sinks at this; he cannot bear
 So suddenly to part with one so dear:
 Thus melting grief hath forc'd that noble mind,
 In which pale fear could ne'er an entrance find.
 The senate's sorrow just addresses show,
Both houses are the haunts of sorrow now.
 Those martial men who can see others die
 Without concern, none of their cheeks are dry:
 Tame female tears seize unrelenting eyes,
When WILLIAM weeps the brave must sympathize!
 The clergy mix their prayers with sighs and tears,
 The people's looks express their grief and fears.
 A gen'ral damp is o'er the nation spread,
 As if none car'd to live now MARY's *dead.*
 MARY the best of women and of wives,
 The fairest pattern for all female lives;
 The church's patroness, darling o' th' state,
 Alas! she's gone, complaints come now too late!
 To her dear mem'ry if we all would make
 A grateful offering, let's entirely take,
 And to the King, her dear delight, transfer
 The *love* and *loyalty* we had for her:

Let him of duty have a double share,
The just reward of his now doubled care.

The dean not only paid the above just tribute to the memory of the late Queen, but likewise composed the following "*Humble address of the justices of the peace and grand jury, from the sessions holden for the county palatine of Durham, on the death of her late majesty.*"

May it please your sacred majesty!

In the midst of that *deep* and *universal* sorrow, which your majesty's and these nations inexpressible loss so justly occasioned, WE cannot but own the sparing of your majesty to be an inestimable blessing of heaven to us. WE therefore beseech your majesty to submit to the will of heaven, which seems to have deposited the interest, not only of these three kingdoms, but of all the injured part of Europe, into your majesty's single hand, and thereby made your safety and success the greatest concern, and most hearty wish of the better part of the christian world; but more especially of us, and all your subjects, whose welfare so entirely depends on the prosperity of your glorious undertaking that we of all mankind are most obliged to tender our lives and fortunes for your service, and to offer up our most hearty prayers for your majesty's long life and lasting health, by which real, but just demonstration, we will ever approve ourselves,

Your majesty's
Most faithful and obedient subjects,
&c. &c.

P. 361, l. 9.—Wrote to Mrs. Comber after the dean's death, &c.

It is natural to conclude the reader of the foregoing memoirs would wish to know how long the dean's lady survived him, the editor therefore subjoins the following account of her last illness and death, with a general idea of her character as drawn by the hand of her son, the editor's grandfather:

January,

“ January 20th, 1721^o. It pleased Almighty God to take to himself my dear mother, Mrs. Alice Comber, who, after a declining illness of some weeks, meekly resigned up her soul to God who gave it, about eleven o’clock, on Friday the 20th of January. She was a dutiful daughter to her parents, a tender and affectionate wife to her husband, a most indulgent and kind parent to all her children, charitable and liberal, *almost to a fault*, to all who were *real* objects of charity : in fine she was *a truly devout woman*, and made the serving her God the chief business of her life, and I trust in God she now reaps the fruit of her labours, and rests in the Lord. She was,” adds he, “ in the sixty-seventh year of her age.”

From other family records it appears that this pious and excellent woman died in the city of York, and her remains were interred in the parish church of Stonegrave, close by the side of her son William, a short inscription to their memory, engraved on a brass plate, which is laid over them, being composed by her surviving son, who drew up the above account of her death.

P. 376, l. 18.—A long and elegant Latin inscription, &c.

M. S.

Siste, Viator, Gradum !

Moræ non erit dispendium scire

Quanti Viri venerandos premis cineres.

Exuvias mortales

(Perenniori fœlicitati maturus)

Heic deponi voluit

THOMAS COMBER, S. T. P. Grande Nomen !

(Pluribus haud Opus)

Vir

Pietate, Eruditione, Ingenio, Judicio,

Cæterisque Animi dotibus,

Clarus :

(Majora

(Majora Vero fingentem
 Non audis Panegyrim).
 Ob sanctæ Matris Ecclesiæ Ang. causam
 Quoad Doctrinam, Cultum, Disciplinam, Patrimonium,
 Contra Novatores omnes
 Scriptis
 Fœliciter defensam,
 Dignus haud simplici Marmore.
 GULIELMO et MARIÆ
 Principibus illustrissimis
 à Sacris;
 Ecclesiæ Dunelmensis per decennium
 (Breve nimis)
 Decanus.
 Ad maxima quæque capeffenda idoneus,
 Adque altiora munera promovendus,
 Nisi publicis votis obstitisset Mors invida.
 Plura, (licet Meritis debita,)
 Non capiet Marmor.
 Probis omnibus luctum et sui desiderium relinquens
 Discessit vicesimo quinto die Novembris,
 Anno { Salutis, M, DC, XC, IX.
 { Ætatis, LV.
 Provectiore senio
 (Modò visum Deo)
 Dignus.

SACRED TO MEMORY.
 Traveller stop thy Foot!
 It will be no Loss of Time to know
 How great a Man's venerable Ashes thou treadest upon.
 THOMAS COMBER, D. D. a great Name!
 One need say no more,
 (Being now fit for more lasting Happiness,)
 Ordered his Robes of Mortality to be placed here:

A MAN

A MAN

Celebrated for Piety, Learning, Genius, Judgment,

And all other Talents of Mind :

(Thou dost not hear a Panegyric

Straining beyond Truth.)

Worthy of more than one Monument,

For his happy Defence by his Writings

Of his holy Mother the CHURCH of ENGLAND,

As to her Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, Patrimony,

Against all Innovators.

CHAPLAIN

To WILLIAM and MARY, most illustrious Princes !

DEAN OF DURHAM,

(Alas ! too short a Time,)

Ten Years ;

Able to undertake the greatest Employments,

Likely to be raised to higher Preferments,

Had not envious Death

Opposed the Wishes of the Public.

This Marble will not contain

Many more Things ; (though his Merits deserve them.)

Leaving all good men in Sorrow for his Loss,

He died the 25th of November,

In the Year { of our Redemption, 1699.
 { of his Age, 55.

Worthy

(If it had pleased God)

Of a more advanced Age.

P. 376, l. 19.—Composed by his friend
the Rev. Mr. Milner, &c.

This fact appears from an original letter of Mr. Milner to
the dean's widow, still extant, which bears date "Durham,
October 29th, 1700," containing his acknowledgments for a
present

present that lady had made him, which he says, “was so very generous and disproportioned to his deserts, that had he been present, he could not have had the confidence to receive it.”—Mr. Milner says, “it was a sensible pleasure to him to find he stood so fair in Mrs. Comber’s esteem, as to be thought worthy of her commands; but that she overvalued his performance by adding a largess when the *honour* of doing it was *abundant reward*. That truly great man,” adds Mr. Milner, “whose loss not only *you*, but the *whole nation* bewails, merited a pen more equal to his worth: but,” says he, “the worthy labours of his own will supply that defect, and give late posterity a juster idea of the great endowments wherewith he was blest. ’Tis in this reflection, madam,” continues Mr. Milner, “that I take great satisfaction, viz. that the *piety* and *learning* of his excellent works, will justify the *sincerity of his epitaph*, and that they which read it hereafter will have only to say, I may have *come short of*, not *exceeded* the truth.”

So *handsome* and *deserved* an *eulogium* paid to the memory of the pious dean must have been very triumphant to the feelings of his widow, and whilst it perfectly corresponded with that tender recollection of him which ever pervaded her mind for the long space of twenty-one years that she survived him, must have afforded as much consolation to her as the case would admit.

P. 377, l. 22.—His picture, &c.

It is probable this was the only original portrait of him ever taken from the life, and the painter’s name is not known: the resemblance is said to have been a good one, but the colours are reported to have *very soon* faded. It was taken *about* the thirty-fifth year of his age, as appears from a letter on this subject to Mrs. Thornton. *Sir Ralph Cole*, of the bishopric of Durham, who had a very great regard for the dean, thought he remembered him sufficiently to take a likeness of him from memory, after his death: this piece, in the possession of the dean’s grand-son,

son, *William Brooke, esq;* of *Wakefield, Yorkshire*, shews that Sir Ralph's friendship was mistaken, as there is nothing of that fine openness and sweetness of countenance in this painting, which so remarkably distinguishes the other.

P. 379, l. 2.—His old friend Dr. Cave, &c.

When the intimacy betwixt Dr. Comber and Dr. Cave first began, no where appears. Dr. Cave was admitted of St. John's College, Cambridge, May 9th, 1653, almost six years before Dr. Comber was admitted of Sydney-College: he took his degree of M. A. in 1660, so that it is not probable the acquaintance began at the university between these two learned men; the difference of their standing being so considerable, and they moreover not being countrymen.

P. 391, l. 22.—Virtue is oftentimes rewarded with outward success and prosperity, &c.

The following remarkable passage in a much admired writer so exactly coincides with the above sentiment, that no other apology seems necessary for inserting it than merely to premise, that it had not particularly attracted the editor's attention till the sheets which contain this part of the text of these memoirs were all struck off.

“An invisible providence often attends the steps of the righteous*, and *conducts them in the paths of PROSPERITY and success*. But though the practice of virtue is often profitable, *always satisfactory*, IN THIS LIFE; though it bring along with it various present blessings and rewards, yet it insures to us *infinitely more and greater in reversion*.” See *Carr's Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 325.

* See p. 375, l. 1. of these memoirs.

ERRATA.

Page.	Line.			Page.	Line.		
46	13	for <i>flemmis</i>	read <i>flammiſ.</i>	199	15	for <i>perſectō</i>	read <i>proſectō.</i>
46	13	<i>ſial</i>	<i>ſiat.</i>	201	18	<i>would</i>	<i>would not.</i>
70	25	<i>ſcool</i>	<i>ſchool.</i>	207	20	<i>to</i>	<i>of.</i>
73	7	dele	<i>part.</i>	256	26	<i>Thornton</i>	<i>Odington.</i>
82	24	for <i>ſcriptures</i>	read <i>ſcripture.</i>	269	18	dele	<i>the.</i>
98	18	<i>enable</i>	<i>enable me.</i>	272	3	dele	<i>ap-</i>
155	10	<i>too</i>	<i>two.</i>	312	1	for <i>concieve</i>	read <i>conceive.</i>
169	22	<i>one</i>	<i>own.</i>	393	7	<i>aſtronomy</i>	<i>aſtrology.</i>
170	15	<i>it</i>	<i>in.</i>				



